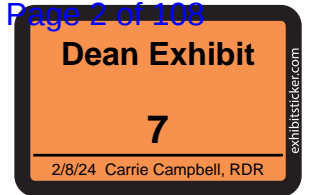


Exhibit 70

Plaintiffs' Corrected Averment of Jurisdictional Facts and
Evidence and/or Statement of Facts as to Defendant Al Rajhi Bank
Pursuant to Rule 56.1





THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

— and —

COUNTERTERRORISM

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



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Introduction

THE MEN, THE MONEY & THE MINDSET

*Saudi Arabia's Effort to Combat
Terrorism and Terror-Financing*





It is in the Kingdom's national interest to defeat terrorism, and it is a national priority. Today, multiple actors, each with a respective ideological agenda, have targeted the Kingdom with the goal of destabilizing the country and terrorizing the Saudi people.

Whether it is non-state actors like Al-Qa'ida, the terror-state "Daesh"/ISIL, or state-sponsored terror from Iran and its proxies, Saudi Arabia has as much as any other country a national security incentive to stop the men, the money, and the mindset that inspire and incite violent extremism.

Saudi Arabia's strategy to fight terrorism and extremism is founded upon these three areas of concern: security (the men); financial controls (the money) and "de-radicalization" (the mindset). Today, the Kingdom is one of the leading nations in combating terrorism and terror-financing, and has been working closely with its allies on all fronts. This global collaboration has included: military intelligence cooperation with the Defense and the Interior ministries of the Saudi government; coalition air-strikes against "Daesh"/ISIL in Syria; "fusion-center" cooperation with the U.S. military and U.S. military technology transfers; multi-national terror-financing investigations, strengthened international banking money-exchange and money-transfer controls; and cyber-security and information-exchange.

“Having Saudi fighter pilots running bombing raids against ISIS is no small thing. Having Saudi imams publicly condemn ISIS as apostates makes a difference”

John Hannah

Former security advisor to Vice President Dick Cheney, interview, January 2015

This international cooperation has resulted in the prevention of terrorist attacks. For example, the interception of two plastic explosives hidden in printer cartridges on board cargo delivery planes headed from Yemen to Chicago in October 2010 was not only the result of Saudi intelligence acting in cooperation with U.S. Homeland Security, but of the rehabilitation of a former Guantánamo Bay prisoner, Jabir Jubran Al-Fayfi, who returned home to Saudi Arabia and confessed knowledge of the plot following his immersion in that counseling program.¹

The devastating May 2003 and May 2004 terrorist bombings in the Kingdom galvanized the Saudi people against terrorism. As George Tenet, former Director of the Central Intelli-

gence Agency, reported at a hearing before the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on February 24, 2004, the first attack at Riyadh prompted the Saudi government to undertake its campaign to decisively eliminate Al-Qa'ida in the Kingdom within the next decade. "Saudi officers", Mr. Tenet said of that campaign, "have paid with their lives."ⁱⁱ

From May 2003 onward the Kingdom devoted its full resources to combating Islamist militancy, and the resources were substantial: the total security budget for 2004, 2005, and 2006 increased from USD 8.5 to 10 to 12 billion, respectively. Ten years later, the 2016 budget has allocated USD 56.8 billion to counterterrorism and military spending, which includes the Saudi-led coalition war against Iran-backed rebels in Yemen. The training of the Kingdom's Special Forces military units has been intensified with assistance from the U.S. and the UK.ⁱⁱⁱ

Saudi Arabia shares the same terrorist enemies as the United States and has been fighting the same war on terror as its U.S. partner for over two decades—campaigns that have included hijacking and suicide-bomber plots, car bombs, border incursions, assassination attempts, industrial sabotage, missile attacks, and the threat of chemical, biological, and radiological ("dirty" bomb) weapons of mass destruction (WMD), this last a program rigorously pursued by Al-Qa'ida under Osama bin Laden's direction. Today, Saudi Arabia possesses a highly sophisticated anti-terror apparatus that has been praised internationally, consisting of over a dozen agencies within various Royal Saudi military branches and under the aegis of the Ministry of Interior, each agency and its subordinate offices cooperating with its U.S. or another international counterpart.

“After September 11, 2001, Saudi Arabia embarked on a very aggressive counterterrorism campaign, arresting thousands of people, questioning thousands of suspects, dismantling al-Qa’ida cells and killing or capturing their leaders, seizing large caches of arms, extraditing suspects from other countries, establishing joint task forces with global partners, including the United States. The Riyadh compound bombing, in May 2003, however created a turning point in Saudi Arabia’s fight against extremism.”

Abdullah F. Ansary

Fellow, The Homeland Security Program
at George Washington University

“In all cases, the Saudi government worked closely with the United States and responded quickly to better secure U.S. installations and interests.”





I

COMBATING TERRORISM

*Saudi Initiatives and Cooperation
with the United States and
International Organizations*

SAUDI INTERNAL SECURITY & CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE FORCES

Saudi Arabia's Special Operations Forces (SOF) and sub-agencies: the SEF and SSF

The Kingdom's U.S.-trained Special Operations Forces (SOF) are drawn from the country's army and navy and are joined by the Ministry of Interior's Saudi Emergency Force (SEF), which specializes in domestic counterterrorism and internal security operations. The Saudi Airborne Brigade's 4th and 5th Battalions provide an airborne SOF element comprising three companies in strength. Units are based at the King Faisal, King Abdul Aziz, and King Khaled military cities across the country. A naval SOF capability is provided by the Maritime Security Units, which are drawn from the Royal Saudi Marines. These are tasked with direct action; counterterrorism, intelligence-gathering, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), hostage rescue, and combat search-and-rescue.

Numbering 10,000, the Forces go through a rigorous training program designed to prepare soldiers for every possible contingency, from attacks on convoys, hostage search-and-recovery, bomb clearance, the storming of militant hideouts, precision shooting, and border surveillance. Basic military training lasts three months, followed by another month of security training and an additional specialization.^{iv}

Special Forces Land: The Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) Airborne Brigade, based in Riyadh, comprises, in addition to other battalions, three Special Forces Companies that have evolved to become an independent fighting force due to the increasing threat of terrorism in the region. These Special Forces operate directly under the command of the Minister of Defense and have intensified counterterrorism exercises with conventional forces following the March 2015 attack on RSLF soldiers by Islamic State militants.

Special Forces Marines: U.S. Navy SEALs have trained both the Royal Saudi Navy Special Forces and the Royal Saudi Marines in minor-formation tactics and unconventional warfare. Saudi Marines have also participated in exercises with the U.S. Marine 4th Assault Amphibious Battalion.

Saudi Emergency Force (SEF): These units are supported by the Saudi Emergency Force (SEF), which specializes in counterterrorism with more than a dozen bases located across the country. The SEF is the counterterrorism unit of the General Directorate of Investigations with 13 centers across the country.^v

The Ministry of Interior and the SSF

The Ministry of Interior's Special Security Force (SSF), comprising some 500 operatives, is tasked with internal security operations and is the equivalent of a U.S. special weapons and tactics (SWAT) team organization. The operations of the Special Security Force include: 1) counterterrorism operations 'in all forms and methods'; 2) VIP protection at home and abroad; 3) aviation protection for local and international flights; 4) guarding and protecting country embassies abroad in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 5) Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and counter-improvised explosive devices (C-IED); 6) protection of critical installations and facilities; 7) supporting other security sectors and maintaining security during the Hajj in cases of disasters and crises.

The work of these Saudi SOF units most recently includes deployment to Yemen to assist in the conflict against Shia Houthi rebels, and they were tasked to take part in wider U.S.-led operations against 'Daesh'/ISIL in early 2016.

Cyber-Security and Information Warfare

Saudi Arabia enacted laws against 'cyber-crime' in 2007, laying down penalties for offenses such as hacking into websites. Particularly heavy penalties are prescribed for anyone who assists a terrorist group to build or operate a website, or who uses a website to disseminate information such as instructions on how to build an explosive device.^{vi}

In February 2013, the International Data Corporation (IDC) reported that Saudi Arabia invested the most of any country in the Middle East in technology, including cyber capabilities, underscoring the growing importance with which the Kingdom sees cyber-security. The Saudi government and Ministry of Defense have expressed a desire to form a unified department, working in both the public and private sector, specifically tasked to defend the Kingdom against cyber threats.^{vii}

Conventional Forces and Counterterrorism

The Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) and the Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) are charged with defending the territorial integrity of the Saudi State against potential aggressors. These threats have proliferated in recent years, with threats from the Islamic State in Iraq (now 'Daesh'/ISIL), Iran just across the Arabian Gulf, and militant and extremist groups. The Kingdom has three major self-contained 'military cities' in strategic areas so that combat forces can respond quickly to threats to Saudi security. These cities are located such that forces can cover sensitive border regions, including the frontiers with Iraq and Yemen, and can counter potential threats to major cities, sea ports, oil installations, and the holy sites of Islam. A fourth military city is being built.

The Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) is the centerpiece of the Kingdom's defense structure and has been highly effective in combating Daesh in Syria, such as during airstrikes with U.S. coalition forces in early February 2016. By February 2016, the U.S. and its own coalition forces led 10,113 strikes (6,763 in Iraq; 3,350 in Syria) against Daesh, and Saudi Arabia was publicly highlighted as partner in those airstrikes. These attacks included the destruction of or damage to the ISIL fighting forces, training bases, compounds, headquarters, command and control facilities, a finance center, supply trucks, and armed vehicles.

SAUDI COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

INTERPOL

In March 2009, Saudi Arabia and Interpol published the largest-ever issue of 'Red Notices'--international wanted-persons notices--for over 80 suspected terrorists with links to Al-Qa'ida in Iraq and in Afghanistan. A 'Red Notice' can be requested by any Interpol member country and is issued by Interpol's General Secretariat headquarters. It is placed in the central database and added to foreign law enforce-

ment data bases. It is sent to all 187 member countries with details of terror suspects to help those enforcement officials world-wide in their search. Such a notice remains in effect until the wanted fugitive is extradited.^{viii}

In January 2011, Interpol released ‘Red Notices’ for 47 terror suspects wanted by the Kingdom. Interpol’s General Secretariat Headquarters in Lyon issued the Notices at the request of that body’s National Central Bureau (NCB) in Riyadh. The Interpol National Central Bureau (NCB) for Saudi Arabia is part of the Ministry of the Interior and partners with the Kingdom’s General Directorate of Investigations.

In March 2011, the first Arabic Interpol mobile police training program took place at the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences in Riyadh, with investigative units from Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, and Yemen, trained under the auspices of that international organization.^{ix}

In January 2014, Interpol and Saudi Arabia strengthened fugitive investigations, including electronic surveillance. Interpol-Riyadh arranged for its frontline police officers across the country to have direct access to Interpol’s global databases.

UNCCT

The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre was established in September 2011 to promote international counterterrorism through the implementation of the U.N.’s Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and within the international body’s Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF). The UNCCT was founded with an initial contribution of USD 10 million from the Kingdom, followed by an additional USD 100 million from Riyadh in August 2014. Other donors include the U.S., the U.K, Norway and Germany. The Centre consists of an Advisory Board of 21 member states including the U.S., the U.K., Russia, China, Germany, France, Switzerland, and numerous Arab and Muslim-majority states.^x

In February 2005, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosted the first international counterterrorism conference in Riyadh, at which the late Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al Saud, called upon the international community to establish an international center to fight terrorism, which eventually became the UNCCT.

In September 2006, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the landmark United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The ‘Plan of Action’ incorporated four “pil-

lars” intended to I) address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; II) to prevent and combat terrorism; III) build states’ capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and IV) ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law on a fundamental basis. The second pillar acknowledged the need for an international center to fight terrorism. These pillars became the foundation of the Kingdom’s UN project. To date, the UNCCT has initiated more than 30 non-military counterterrorism projects at the global, regional, and national levels.

These include:

- 1) projects to understand the Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) phenomenon as part of a UN-wide implementation plan of U.N. Security Council Res. 2178 (of 2014) to stem the flow of terrorist fighters;
- 2) the development of global ‘good practices’ to uphold the protection of human rights while countering terrorism and implementing human rights-compliant measures in counterterrorism;
- 3) the Border Security Initiative (BSI), jointly with the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), to train agents in peripheral security measures in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel (the zone between Africa’s Sahara Desert and the Savannah region just to its south, and stretching from the Atlantic to the Red Sea);
- 4) support for the development and adoption of regional counterterrorism strategies in Central Asia and Southern Africa, as well as an integrated strategy to counter terrorism and the proliferation of small arms to the Central African region. On the national level, the UNCCT is supporting the Integrated Assistance for Counter-Terrorism (I-ACT) initiative through projects targeting the spread of violent extremist propaganda.^{xi}

SAUDI-U.S. JOINT COUNTERTERRORISM I TECHNOLOGICAL, MILITARY AND ENERGY SECURITY

Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

The Ministry of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have a long history of working bilaterally and regionally to promote mutual security and economic prosperity.

On January 16, 2013, the two agencies signed an arrangement to implement each nation's "trusted traveler" program. These programs facilitate trade and travel between the Kingdom and the United States and will help authorities more effectively identify potential threats to keep their borders and their countries secure.^{xii}

Additionally, the Kingdom has been working with DHS to strengthen controls in the following areas: a) Customs and Border Protection (CBP); Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Within these programs, Saudi Arabia has training and technical missions in a joint effort with DHS's Office of International Affairs and Components. Saudi Arabia maintains one of the most active participation rates in these programs in the Middle East.^{xiii}

Department of Homeland Security: Cyber-Security

1. The Ministry of Interior and DHS are also cooperating in cyber-security, partnering to protect vital government and private sector infrastructure and to make cyberspace more secure for citizens of both countries.
2. Cooperation between the MOI and DHS highlights continuing efforts in combating international security challenges in the areas of cyber-crimes, physical infrastructure protection, and maritime security through the joint OPM-MOI program. Former DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano and her successor, Secretary Jeh Charles Johnson, traveled to Riyadh in 2013 and 2014, respectively, to affirm ongoing cooperation in combating cyber-crime and strengthening maritime security and infrastructure protection.^{xiv}

SAUDI-U.S. JOINT COUNTERTERRORISM II FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION

Shortly after the May 12, 2003, attacks in Riyadh, a Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) was set up to help identify the perpetrators. This was the first time that U.S. law enforcement officials had been stationed in Saudi Arabia to pursue intelligence and financing issues. This effort set the stage for more permanent bilateral cooperation with the United States. In August 2003, a delegation of senior U.S. counterterrorism officials from the National Security Council, the State Department, the Department of the Treasury, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) traveled to the Kingdom to establish a joint effort to focus on bank accounts, bank records, and computer records. This JTTF was also tasked to receive real-time information regarding suspicious activities and pursue potential leads.^{xv}

In September 2003, the FBI and the IRS's Criminal Investigative Division began a training program to investigate and combat terrorism-financing with Saudi Arabia, holding sessions in Riyadh and Washington; these have continued since then. FBI "fly-teams," created to respond to terrorism incidents or threats around the world, have assisted investigations in the Kingdom. Additionally, the Terrorism Financing Operations Section of the FBI, working jointly with Riyadh's General Intelligence Directorate, has made "tremendous progress," according to the FBI, in tracking and freezing the assets of terrorists. Today, Saudi Arabia is a leading nation in combating terror-financing.

The Counter-ISIL Finance Group (CIFG) was formed as a multi-national initiative in March 2015 to support the efforts of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, and is co-led by Italy, Saudi Arabia, and the United States. The group most recently met on April 7, 2016, hosted by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, to pursue the following objectives: 1) to prevent 'Daesh'/ISIL from accessing the international financial system; 2) to counter the extortion and exploitation of assets and resources that transit, enter, or originate from 'Daesh'/ISIL-held territory; 3) to deny 'Daesh'/ISIL funding from abroad; and 4) to prevent 'Daesh'/ISIL from providing financial or material support to foreign affiliates.^{xvi}

In March 2016, the U.S. and the Kingdom jointly took action to disrupt the fund-

raising and support networks of various terrorist groups by imposing sanctions on several individuals and organizations with ties across the Middle East, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. This follows the 2015 designation of seventeen individuals identified as ‘Daesh’/ISIL officials and financial facilitators. Since 2004, the Kingdom has worked with the U.S. Department of the Treasury in identifying and publicizing individuals and front groups involved in terror-financing, while the Kingdom has legally formalized such designations in its Law of Terrorist Crimes and Financing and its Royal Decree A/44 against money-laundering networks. Many of these individuals are included on the United Nations Sanctions list pursuant to the body’s counterterrorism legal regime.^{xvii}

On September 10, 2015, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, in conjunction with the Kingdom, identified four key Hamas financial facilitators and their conduit-company pursuant to U.S. Executive Order 13224, which targets terrorists and those providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism. [U.S. Executive Orders 13224 (2001) and 12947 (1995) designate charities as front-groups for terrorist financing].

On November 4, 2015, the U.S. Department of the Treasury held a public-private dialogue on correspondent banking with Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. This was the first-ever such event, and was dedicated to the discussion of cross-border banking and terrorist-financing issues.^{xviii}

In May 2009, the Kingdom was admitted to the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, the Brussels-based network of intelligence units most recently re-chartered in 2013, after the Kingdom’s Financial Intelligence Unit achieved the required conditions of membership. The Group is an international body through which the anti-money laundering units of individual FIUs meet to coordinate efforts against financial crimes and terror-financing.^{xix}

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S. Department of the Treasury initiated the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) to identify, track, and pursue terrorists and their networks. By 2004, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and Saudi Arabia eliminated four branches of the Al-Haramain charity, one of the biggest terror-financing operations in the world and the funding organ and channel for the Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam bombings in 1998.

The TFTP has worked with Saudi Arabia to track and close down networks of terrorist-support money networks. These establishments have been thoroughly eliminated.^{xx}

SAUDI-U.S. JOINT COUNTERTERRORISM III

THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT, MAY 2015

On the occasion of the Camp David Summit in May 2015, the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and five other Gulf nations issued a joint statement on the Task Force on Counterterrorism and Border Security of the U.S.-Gulf Cooperation Council Strategic Cooperation Forum (SCF), founded in March 2012. The countries agreed:

- 1) to implement new and recurring large-scale exercises emphasizing inter-operability against symmetric threats such as terrorist attacks, cyber-attacks, or other tactics associated with hybrid warfare;
- 2) to ensure arms sales contributing to national security are “fast-tracked” to GCC countries; 3) to set up a special foreign military sales procurement office to process GCC-wide sales and to streamline third-party transfers;
- 4) to aid GCC countries in the development of a region-wide ballistic missile defense capability and a ballistic missile early warning system;
- 5) to enhance maritime security, cyber-security, military preparedness, and critical infrastructure protection; and
- 6) to develop rapid-response capabilities that will coordinate counterterrorism, peace-keeping, and stabilization operations among countries in the region.^{xxi}

II

COMBATING TERROR- FINANCING





NEW SAUDI LEGAL REGIMES

Overview

According to the 2014 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Saudi Arabia is the only Gulf country to enact legislation in all of the following areas: 1) the criminalization of drug-money laundering; 2) the criminalization of money-laundering beyond drugs; 3) “Know-Your-Customer” provisions; 4) the reporting of large banking transactions; 5) the reporting of suspicious banking transactions; 6) the maintenance of banking records over time; 7) disclosure protection; 8) the official criminalization of terror-financing; 9) the reporting of suspected terrorist financing; 10) cross-border transportation of currency; 11) the establishment of financial intelligence units; 12) an international law enforcement cooperation system for identification; 13) the ability to freeze terrorist activity without delay; 14) as a state party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention; 15) as a state party to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).^{xxii}

In June 2015, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) extended Observer status to Saudi Arabia and selected the Kingdom as a candidate for potential full membership. Currently, Saudi Arabia and Israel have FATF Observer status, as do twenty-three Observer organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, the European Central Bank, and Interpol. This status requires a country’s, or an organization’s, full endorsement of FATF practices. Saudi Arabia is currently a member of the FATF’s sub-set organization, the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF).^{xxiii}

The FATF was established by the G-7 in 1989 with the objective of establishing international standards regarding the implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist-financing, and the financial facilitation of WMD transfers. The body consists of thirty-seven members (thirty-five countries and two regional jurisdictions) including the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Switzerland, most European and Latin American countries, China, Singapore, and the GCC. The U.S. delegation to the FATF includes members of the Department of the Treasury, State and Justice; the National Security Council; and federal financial regulators. In 1990, the FATF first developed a series of “Recommendations,” now numbering forty-one and most recently revised in 2012, which are recognized worldwide as the international standard for combating money laundering, the financing of terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

INCSR 2015 Volume II

Money Laundering and Financial Crimes

Actions by Governments																					
	Criminalized Drug Money Laundering	Criminalized ML Beyond Drugs	Know-Your-Customer Provisions	Report Large Transactions	Report Suspicious Transactions (YPN)	Maintain Records Over Time	Disclosure Protection - "Safe Harbor"	Criminalize "Tipping Off"	Cross-Border Transportation of Currency	Financial Intelligence Unit (*)	Intl Law Enforcement Cooperation	System for Identifying/Forfeiting Assets	Arrangements for Asset Sharing	Criminalized Financing of Terrorism	Report Suspected Terrorist Financing	Ability to Freeze Terrorist Assets w/o Delay	States Party to 1988 UN Drug Convention	States Party to Intl. Terror Finance Conv.	States Party to UNTOC	States Party to UNCAC	US or Intl Org Sanctions/Penalties
Govt/Jurisdiction																					
Qatar	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Romania	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Russia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Rwanda	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
St. Kitts and Nevis	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
St. Lucia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
St. Maarten ³	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Samoa	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
San Marino	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Sao Tome and Principe	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y*	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Saudi Arabia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Senegal	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Serbia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Seychelles	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Sierra Leone	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y*	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Singapore	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Slovak Republic	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Slovenia	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Solomon Islands	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
Somalia	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
South Africa	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N

From: The 2014 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report

Penal Laws on Terror-Financing

In December 2013, the Saudi Council of Ministers passed its Penal Law Concerning Crimes of Terrorism and its Financing, signed into law by the late King Abdullah in February 2014. This law added forty-one new laws to the country's existing counterterrorism laws. Among its jurisdictions, this law:

- a) gives the Minister of the Interior the power to issue arrest warrants against those suspected of having committed terrorist crimes and to delegate this power as he sees fit "according to guidelines he prescribes;" and
- b) defines terrorist crime as:

"Any act undertaken by the offender directly or indirectly in pursuance of an individual or collective criminal enterprise intended to disturb the public order, destabilize the security of society or the stability of the state, expose its national unity to danger, obstruct the implementation of the organic law or some of its provisions, harm the reputation of the state or its standing, endanger any of the state facilities or its natural resources, force any of its authorities to do or abstain from doing something, or threaten to carry out actions leading to any of the aforementioned objectives or encourage their accomplishment."^{xxiv}

Royal Order A/44 (Article IV) Against Terrorism

In March 2014, this royal order formally declared Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, Al-Qa'ida Organization in Iraq (the pre-cursor to 'Daesh'/ISIL), al-Nusra Front (Syria), Hezbollah in the Kingdom (also known as Hezbollah in the Hijaz), the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Houthis as terrorist organizations.^{xxv}

This Royal Order authorized the formation of a committee with members from the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call and Guidance; Ministry of Justice, Court of Grievances and Bureau of Investigation, and Public Prosecution to file a list of the factions identified with the above groups.

Additionally, some of the rulings of the Order that criminalize certain actions of citizens and residents include:

- a) taking part in, calling for, or promoting the fighting in conflicts in other countries or issuing fatwa supporting the matter;
- b) financial or material donations to or funding extremist and terroristic organizations,

factions, and groups or sheltering their members or their promoters inside or outside the Kingdom;

- c) contacting or communicating with groups or factions or individuals who harbor enmity for the Kingdom;
- d) being loyal to, in liaison with, or communicating with another country with the intention of exploiting the secure unity and stability of the Kingdom and its people;
- e) committing offenses against other countries and/or their leaders;
- f) soliciting the help of states, international organizations, or bodies against the Kingdom.^{xxvi}

Ratification of United Nations Laws Against Terror-Financing

On August 23, 2007, the Kingdom ratified the 'International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism' (adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1999). This convention, ratified by 187 countries as of 2015, mandates the identification, detection, and freezing or seizure of funds used or allocated with the purpose of committing terrorist offenses (as defined in Article 2 of this convention) and the forfeiture of funds used or allocated for the purpose of committing acts of terrorism and any proceeds derived therefrom, requiring of signatories "the greatest measure of assistance" in connection with criminal investigations or criminal or extradition proceedings in respect of terrorist acts. State parties commit themselves not to use bank secrecy as a justification for refusing to cooperate in the suppression of terrorist financing.

United Nations Resolutions 1267, 1333, 1373

The Kingdom has also supported the following requirements of various UN resolutions related to combating terrorism:

- a) Freezing of funds and other financial assets of terrorist regimes based on UN Security Council Resolution 1267;
- b) Freezing of funds of listed individuals related to terrorist activity based on UN Security Council Resolution 1333;
- c) The signing of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism based on UN Resolution 1373;
- d) Reporting to the UN Security Council the implementation of Resolution 1390.^{xxvii}

COUNTERTERRORISM & SAUDI INSTITUTIONAL CONTROLS

The Elimination of Money-Transfer Center Networks

Saudi Arabia has eliminated the nation-wide network of money transfer centers that were used for many years as terrorist-financing vehicles under the guise of “charities”. After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S. Department of the Treasury initiated the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) to identify, track and pursue terrorists and their networks. The United States has worked closely with the Kingdom to track and close down these networks outside the reach of the traditional financial sector.

The very features which had made money-transfer centers attractive to legitimate customers, such as anonymity and lack of a paper trail, also made the system attractive for the transfer of illicit funds. In 2003, Saudi Arabia founded the Saudi Arabia Financial Intelligence Unit (SAFIU), established by the country’s “Anti-Money Laundering Law” of August 23, 2003, and comprising 130 officers. By February 2010, SAFIU arrested some 96 suspected terrorist financiers.^{xxviii}

Saudi Arabia’s comprehensive crackdown on illicit money-transfers was later praised by an official of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), who remarked in March 2004 that the Kingdom’s new regulations to control suspicious financial transactions “probably go further than any country in the world.”^{xxix}

The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA)

The Kingdom’s financial regulatory agency, the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA), maintains strengthened oversight over banks operating in the country. The SAMA exchanges information on activities related to money-laundering and terrorist-financing with other banking supervisory authorities and with law enforcement agencies.

In February 2003, SAMA began to implement a major technical program to train judges and investigators on these criminal banking activities. The program has sought to educate judges and investigators on legal matters involving terror-financing methods, international requirements for financial secrecy, and the methods used by criminals to exchange information.

In 2004, SAMA instructed Saudi banks to establish a supervisory committee to coordinate all efforts to freeze the assets of individuals identified with terrorist activity. The committee is composed of senior bank officers who are in charge of risk control, auditing, money-laundering units, legal affairs, and international operations. All Saudi banks route their responses and relevant information via the SAMA.

As a result of strengthened oversight through the SAMA, Saudi Arabia implemented the forty-one Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations on the prevention of money-laundering and the FATF's eight special recommendations on terrorist financing. The US Department of the Treasury has called the Kingdom's banking oversight the strongest in the Gulf region.

SAUDI ARABIAN FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT (SAFIU)

The SAFIU and the Anti-Money-Laundering Law of 2003

Article 11 of the Saudi Arabia Anti-Money Laundering Law of August 2003 implemented the Saudi Arabia Financial Intelligence Unit (SAFIU). In cooperation with that body:

- a) (Article 7): provides that upon gathering sufficient indications of large or unusual financial transactions, financial and non-financial institutions must
 - 1) inform the SAFIU and
 - 2) submit a detailed report on all parties involved in the transaction;

- b) (Article 8): states that all financial and non-financial institutions must provide all documents, records, and information to the SAFIU, judiciary, or concerned authority in accordance with the applicable transaction when required.
- c) (Article 9): notes that the financial or non-financial institutions involved or their lawyers may not “tip off” a client or related third parties as to the investigation, nor may the principle of confidentiality be invoked.

The Issue of Charities

Charitable giving (zakat) is a religious obligation for Muslims, constituting one of the five “pillars of Islam.” Many Saudis contribute approximately 2.5 percent of their annual income to charitable causes and relief organizations that fund religious education programs, orphanages, hospitals, and other development projects both within Saudi Arabia and around the world. One expert estimates that the charitable donations of the citizens of Saudi Arabia amount to around \$3 to \$6 billion annually, of which ten to twenty percent is disseminated abroad.

In response to criticism and allegations of terror-financing that are directed at Saudi Arabian charitable organizations, the Kingdom has taken a series of steps to provide greater oversight of charitable giving. In December 2002, the government announced the creation of the High Commission for Oversight of Charities to provide assistance to Saudi charities in reforming their operations and improving their transparency.

Excerpt from Terrorist Financing and Money-Laundering *Kristen E. Boon, Douglas C. Lovelace*

In June 2004, the government announced that the future activities of all Saudi charitable committees and organizations would be monitored and directed by a new agency (the ‘Nongovernmental National Commission for Relief and Charity Work Abroad’). This body has become the sole vehicle for private Saudi charitable contributions to be sent abroad.^{xxx}

Various measures since 2003 have improved the oversight of charitable collections. These include:

- A law adopted in August 2003 making money laundering and terror-financing criminal offenses;
- A ban on cash collections at mosques and on transfers abroad of charitable funds

collected in Saudi Arabia, except with governmental approval and subject to stringent reporting requirements;

- A requirement for charitable organizations to have single disbursement bank accounts and an approved official with signatory authority to facilitate tighter controls over such accounts;
- New rules have been codified concerning the opening of bank accounts by charities, including all accounts consisting of one single account for each charity, with sub-accounts permitted, though restricted to only receiving deposits;
- No ATM or credit cards can be issued for these accounts, and all payments may be made only by checks payable to the first beneficiary for deposit in a Saudi bank;
- Closure of unlicensed money exchange houses and closer supervision of informal money transfer houses used to send funds abroad. The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA), the financial oversight authority founded in 2003, conducts tight supervision of so-called “informal” money transfer houses used to send funds abroad;
- New rules governing the insurance sector and capital markets and establishment of the Saudi Arabian Financial Intelligence Unit (SAFIU), in compliance with the standards of the G7’s the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), oversee the collection and sharing of information on suspicious financial transactions;
- The Kingdom further strengthened its crackdown on money laundering by requiring financial institutions to verify customers’ identities and by placing restrictions on non-residents’ ability to open accounts in the country;
- The Ministry of Labor has developed a database containing financial information relating to all of its charities, and updates the database on a quarterly basis with information derived from submitted financial reports. An effort is underway to integrate the charities licensed by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs into this database;
- The Saudi Ministry of Labor is currently conducting an audit of its own licensed charities.
- The establishment of a rewards program ranging from \$270,000 to \$1.87 million for information leading to the arrest of suspects or disruption of terrorist attacks;
- Saudi Arabia has also established official government-operated money remitters intended to compete directly with unlicensed money remitters and informal financial systems. These licensed remitters are called “Speed Cash” and are attached to a commercial bank and therefore subject to all requirements of the parent bank. Officials have stated that it has reduced reliance on informal systems.^{xxxix}





III

COMBATING EXTREMISM

GOVERNMENT AND CLERICAL CONDEMNATION OF EXTREMISM

Saudi government and religious leaders have publicly condemned terrorism and extremism, and these condemnations are both routine and vehement. In his remarks at the UN's Culture of Peace Conference in November 2008, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, (the late) King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, noted that "terrorism and criminality are the enemies of every religion and every culture." In July 2008, the King made similar remarks at the World Conference on Dialogue in Madrid.^{xxxii}

In May 2009, the Second Deputy Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia organized the first national conference on "intellectual security" to address the "intellectual abnormality" that, according to the Saudi government, is "the main reason for terrorism." The declaration issued at this conference described the moderate nature of Islam and warned against "the dangers of embracing deviant ideologies."

In February 2014, the Ministry of Education formally prohibited schools from working with lecturers who were thought to be prone to ideological extremism in order to protect students intellectually. The Ministry of Education banned schools from coordinating with any "inflammatory preacher" who might indoctrinate students.

In order to further combat radical ideology, government officials adopted a series of educational counterterrorism measures aimed at undermining extremist views and disrupting the activities of those who promote violent extremism. These include: a) a counseling program; b) a [religious] "Tranquility" campaign; c) a "Religious Authority" campaign; d) a media campaign; e) a "National Solidarity Campaign" against terrorism; f) the development of public education; g) the monitoring of preaching; h) the review of sponsored publications; i) National-Dialogue conventions; and j) Internet filtering.^{xxxiii}

THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Saudi Public TV and other sponsored channels broadcast a five-part series titled “Jihad Experiences, the Deceit,” which featured terrorists’ confessions and repentant terrorists’ testimonies of how terrorist groups organize, train and recruit. The series also featured Muslim scholars rebutting terrorists’ propaganda from an Islamic perspective.

Also broadcast were interviews with well-known Saudi scholars who recanted their earlier fatwas that supported terrorist attacks and urged terrorist suspects to surrender. The interviews were also published in a book. In addition, other Saudi channels sponsored documentaries such as “The Truth” and the program “Confessions from Inside the Cell,” featuring the confessions of terrorists. There are other programs such as the “Event” and “Dialogue Forum,” which deliver a moderate message, especially to extremists, and report such phenomena as “The Return of Perception,” which first aired on the al-Majd Saudi Channel in September 2005, that featured Ahmad Abdullah al-Shaie, a young Saudi who described himself as a victim, claiming that he was brainwashed into fighting in Iraq, an admission that in turn had an impact on people wanting to fight abroad.

In 2009, the Saudi government bolstered its extensive media campaign against extremist thought in an initiative recognized by the U.S. Department of State. This campaign includes the use of advertisements, billboards, text messages and the Internet to propagate anti-extremism views. At <http://www.gao.gov/products/A87968> one may see a video of a Saudi government-sponsored TV advertisement designed to counter terrorism.^{xxxiv}

Moreover, members of the Saudi Council of Senior Ulama and other senior religious figures have been very active in media efforts, issuing televised condemnations of terrorism in moral and religious terms. Most official academic websites on Islam are now allocating parts of their websites to address radical and deviant thought.

*Excerpt from “Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia’s Approach”
By Abdullah F. Ansary*

NATIONAL SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

In February 2005, the Kingdom carried out a national awareness campaign entitled “The National Solidarity Campaign Against Terrorism,” conducted over several weeks as part of a “strategy to combat extremism and present the true values of the Islamic faith and the importance of tolerance and moderation”. The campaign started on the occasion of the International Conference for Combating Terrorism in the Kingdom, featuring posters and electronic signs in the entrances to public places and streets bearing anti-terrorism slogans on the human costs of terrorism.

Similar messages have been broadcast on television and radio and at sporting events. Schools, mosques, and even the screens of automated teller machines feature such messages. Ministries and government bodies have participated in this campaign by organizing symposiums, exhibitions, and lectures, as well as distributing millions of publications, brochures, pamphlets, magazines, tapes, CDs, and photographs to combat extremism and promote balanced, centrist views and moderation.

In 2007, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs launched a program identified as a ‘Shielding Campaign Against Terrorism’. While previous efforts focused on ‘dealing with a problem after it occurred’, the current campaign aims to safeguard youth against radical ideology and deviant thoughts by using every source available to the ministry, such as sermons, mosque activities, and general education curricula and advocacy.

The public relations department of the ministry has been working on issuing a series of books entitled the ‘Shielding Series’. On 11 October, 2007, the department issued its first release, a work that includes the transcript of the meeting and the dialogue that took place between Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Saudi Imams, and preachers. The dialogue provides a detailed outline of how to address radical ideology and deviant thought.

*Excerpt from “Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia’s Approach”
Abdullah F. Ansary*

DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

There have been several accusations that Saudi schools and textbooks encourage hatred, intolerance, and violence. The Saudi authorities dispute these allegations, but recognize the need to reform the Kingdom's religious-studies curriculum. The Ministry of Education has conducted an audit of school textbooks and curricula to ensure that teachers do not espouse intolerance and extremism. The government has a program in place to continue to remove any element that is radical and inconsistent with traditional Islam. It is worth noting that most of the material found in Saudi textbooks, especially in Sharia studies, is carefully selected. However, many scholars see the problem as coming from teachers who adopt radical ideology and try to influence their students by bypassing the selected curriculum and suggesting alternative books that might carry radical views. To address this issue, the Ministry of Education is providing special training programs to promote religious tolerance for male and female Islamic studies teachers. Several teachers were fired or subjected to punitive action for failure to abide by government instructions to avoid inciting hatred against other religions.

Moreover, the Ministry of the Interior developed a plan (to include lectures and seminars) to portray extremism as a deviant form of Islam to students in schools and universities. Furthermore, as part of the National Solidarity Campaign Against Terrorism, the Ministry of Education sponsored lectures at public schools to promote moderation, tolerance and peace and to point out the dangers of extremism. In May 2007, Saudi public schools carried out an awareness campaign as part of the Ministry of Interior's strategy to combat extremism. Saudi Arabia also increased scholarship and exchange programs for students and educators. Finally, reforming the educational system and raising the standards of schools and universities remain the leading challenges Saudi Arabia faces today. On February 12, 2007, the Council of Ministers approved a six year SAR 9 billion (\$2.3 billion) project to develop Saudi Arabia's public education. It includes upgrading curricula and improving the educational atmosphere and teacher training.

Excerpt from "Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia's Approach"
By Abdullah F. Ansary

MONITORING RELIGIOUS PREACHING

Imams who preach intolerance or hate toward others are dismissed, punished, or retrained. On 27 May 2003, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs fired 353 Imams, 'khateeb,' and muezzin and placed on suspension 1,367 others, who were ordered to join a multi-year enlightenment program devoted to educating imams and monitoring religious preaching.

In addition, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs started an initiative to impose electronic monitoring of all mosques in Saudi Arabia using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The project allows the Ministry to monitor day-to-day activities in any mosque, including prayers and ceremonies, with great accuracy. The project started by covering all mosques in the capital; it was to cover all mosques in the Kingdom by mid-2008.

There are initiatives to conduct a review of all government-sponsored religious materials to ensure that they are free from any extreme views. Saudi embassies have suspended the distribution of several religious materials while the Ministry of Islamic Affairs has implemented a program to review and redeploy Islamic heritage books and print books relating to contemporary issues.^{xxxv}

Excerpt from "Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia's Approach"
By Abdullah F. Ansary

NATIONAL DIALOGUE CONVENTIONS

On April 7, 2003, the Kingdom established the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue in an effort to combat extremism and promote moderate culture among various sections, with the aim of 'consolidating national unity and promoting moral principles such as tolerance, moderation, freedom of expression, and public interest.

The King Abdulaziz Center seeks to accomplish several objectives, such as presenting the true image of Islam inside and outside the country based on moderation.

Roughly every six months since 2003, Saudi Arabia has held a national dialogue conference with all sectors of Saudi society to discuss major issues:

- “National Unity and the Role of Ulema in Cementing It, and International Relations and Agreements and their Effect on National Unity” (July 2003, Riyadh)
- “Extremism and Moderation: A Comprehensive Approach” (first held December 2003, Mecca)
- “To Build and Enhance a Culture of Dialogue in the Saudi Society” (first held June 2004, Medina)
- “The Problems and Expectations of Young People” (first held December 2004, Dhahran)
- “The National Vision for Dealing with World Cultures” (first held June 2005, Riyadh)
- “Education: Reality and Ways of Development” (first held November 2006, Riyadh)

The recommendations made by participants of these conferences have included a call for the rejection of fatwas handed down by individuals on matters of national interest such as peace and war, arguing that such vital subjects must be left to qualified official bodies. These conferences also promote the idea of readmitting former extremists back into society. In addition, the Saudi Human Rights Commission inaugurated a program to educate the public and government officials about human rights and promote a human rights culture in all government bodies.

*Excerpt from “Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia’s Approach”
By Abdullah F. Ansary*

LEGAL MEASURES TO COMBAT RADICAL IDEOLOGY

In addition to the previous approaches, the Kingdom has taken several legal measures to tackle the spread of radical ideology, especially regarding cyberspace.

The Council of Ministers Resolution No 163 of 4 March, 1997 introduced the Internet to

Saudi Arabia. The Resolution identified the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) as the primary supervisory institute for this service and permitted the exclusion of sites that are incompatible with Sharia and national regulations.

This resolution established a committee composed of members from different security agencies to block specific sites. Saudi authorities have officially announced that they block access to nearly 400,000 websites with the aim of blocking offensive content, including radical religious sites, that violates the principles of Islam and social norms. In a similar context, the United Kingdom recently announced plans to tackle websites that promote “violent jihadism”. However, these efforts remain controversial due to the negative effects they might have on freedom of expression.

The Assistant to the Head of the Saudi National Intelligence Agency (SNIA), Prince Abdulaziz bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz, first asserted in 2007 that there are nearly 17,000 extremist Internet sites that carry radical ideologies, with an annual increase of 9,000 websites that “move away from original Islam in order to legitimize violence”.

Furthermore, HRH Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz, the head of SNIA, has stated that the agency, in its efforts to prevent extremism and future acts of terrorist violence, has made outreach efforts to fourteen Western website hosting companies to reduce the activities of more than 5,400 websites used by terrorist groups.

In addition, the SNIA launched a campaign to teach citizens how to monitor the Internet as a new effort to mobilize Saudis to assist authorities in tackling extremism.

In addition, terrorists traditionally have used the Internet for recruiting and training. To tackle the use of the Internet as a base for radicalization, training, and recruiting, the Saudi Council of Ministers approved the Law to Fight Cyber-Crime on April 13, 2007. Article 7 (1) of the cyber-crime law imposes a maximum of ten years’ imprisonment and/or a fine of a maximum of 5 million Saudi riyals (\$1.3 million) for anyone who creates a website for a terrorist organization over the Internet or on any computer, promotes the organization’s radicalism, or propagates information on how to make explosives.

Many experts in Saudi Arabia are calling upon the international community to take effective measures and sponsor a treaty that would criminalize the use of communications technology to spread terrorist ideologies. In their final statement, Saudi researchers and specialists at the Information Technology and National Security Conference asked the UN to press member states to introduce new laws to criminalize the use of communications technology to spread terrorist ideologies that concern all countries. They further recommended the establishment of an international committee to moni-

tor the spread of extremism.

*Excerpt from “Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia’s Approach”
By Abdullah F. Ansary*

COMBATING INTERNET RADICALIZATION: THE ‘SAKINAH’ CAMPAIGN

Saudi Arabia has supported initiatives to combat Internet radicalization. One of the most developed programs is the ‘Sakinah’ campaign, which began several years ago to fight online radicalization and recruitment.^{xxxvi}

Named after the Arabic word for religious-inspired tranquility, it operates as an NGO supported by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. The ‘Sakinah’ campaign is also supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior.^{xxxvii}

King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) is home to the National Internet Center (NIC), which filters and monitors primarily illicit, illegal, or immoral content, followed by sites related to terrorism and extremism.

The introduction of more comprehensive security measures has driven many dedicated extremists to avoid the Internet and other potentially comprising technologies altogether. Militants in the Kingdom now avoid using online channels to transmit sensitive information and instead meet person-to-person to exchange data, particularly with USB flash drives. Mosques are avoided for extremist recruitment due to the extensive crackdown campaigns conducted at those centers. Today, few hardcore jihadists are recruited online, despite sources citing the Internet’s role in recruitment.

Ministry of Interior workers or those from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs track online discussions and surf the Internet to collect material on potential extremism. Those who engage users online are Ulema or religious scholars proficient in modern technology, all with the highest level of understanding of extremist ideologies, including religious interpretations used to justify violence and terrorism. Also working with the campaign are volunteers who have renounced their former beliefs.

In addition to collecting and cataloguing material and engaging in dialogue, another aspect of the ‘Sakinah’ campaign involves infiltrating known extremist and Al-Qa’ida affiliated or inspired websites. This is done to both collect new information and sow dissent within the websites and internet forums used by extremists. The website for ‘Sakinah’ serves as a repository for a wide range of material, including a large number of studies and reports focusing on the work of the campaign, information about other initiatives to combat extremism, numerous audio and video files (including clips of recantations), and media coverage. A section is devoted to interviews with individuals who have renounced violence and extremism.

*Excerpt from “The Sakinah Campaign and Internet Counter-Radicalization in Saudi Arabia”
By Christopher Boucek*

INCREASED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Saudi Arabia’s success in its campaign against radical ideology is having an impact on extremist thought. As a result of the ideological and organizational reviews conducted by well-known Saudi scholars—who recanted their earlier fatwas in support of terrorists and, especially, al-Qa’ida sympathizers—wrote reviews retreating from previous radical and deviant thinking. Similar steps have been undertaken by foreign terrorist theologians who have started to recant their extremism.

Saudi scholars are also drawing on lessons learned from previous experiences, such as the doctrinal revisions of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Algerian militant groups.^{xxxviii} For example, the founder of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Imam al Sharif, wrote a book in prison providing a remarkable recantation and review of his previous doctrines, which provided a theological basis in Islam for terrorist violence. Dr. Fadl, as he is known, who authored Foundations of Preparation for Holy War, considered to be the “Extremist Jihad Bible”, issued a fatwa condemning indiscriminate killing through terror and the targeting of women and children in the name of Islam.

Furthermore, in 2007, Major General Douglas Stone, the Commander of US detention facilities in Iraq, introduced religious-education programs for detainees that are modeled on the Counseling Program in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, the US counseling program

employs Muslim clerics to rebut extremist views and offers job programs for captives, literacy efforts, case reviews, and potential early release from prison to those who demonstrate a willingness to change.^{xxxix}

Additionally, the Kingdom has taken steps to:

Publish and distribute anti-extremist materials: The Saudi Ministries of Islamic Affairs and Interior have produced a variety of books and pamphlets designed to combat extremist ideology. The government estimates that approximately 1.8 million books have been prepared as part of this effort. The Saudi government distributes, via mosques and schools, CDs and cassette tapes with lectures and seminars addressing the issues of terrorism and extremism.

Monitor religious leaders: The Saudi government continues to monitor the preaching and writings of religious leaders and to re-educate those who advocate extremist messages. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs reported that approximately 20,000 of Saudi Arabia's estimated 70,000 mosques are monitored, including all of the large mosques that hold Friday prayers. The government has also held hundreds of seminars and lectures in mosques to ensure that religious leaders preach moderate messages to the public.^{xi}

Monitor School Teachers: The Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs monitors school teachers who teach extremism. Once identified, these teachers are put through re-education programs.

Continue to Monitor Internet Sites: The Ministry of the Interior is monitoring chat rooms that could be sources of militant recruitment. In September 2008, Saudi authorities reported the arrest of three Saudi citizens and two expatriates for promoting militant activities on Internet forums, engaging on-line users in dialogue, spreading misleading information, and recruiting youth to travel abroad for inappropriate purposes. The Ministry of the Interior has called on all Saudis to be vigilant and urged them not to listen to those who promote corruption and sedition. In addition, the Ministry published the on-line usernames utilized by the suspects.^{xii}

*Excerpt From US Government Accountability Office: Combating Terrorism: U.S. Agencies Report Progress Countering Terrorism and Its Financing in Saudi Arabia, but Continued Focus on Counter Terrorism Financing Efforts Needed
September 2009*

Host Conferences and Encourage Dialogue: The Muslim World League in Mecca was

first held in June 2008 and consisted of 500 Muslim scholars from around the world. The second conference was held in Madrid, Spain, in July 2008 and included 300 delegates representing different faiths, including Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Judaism. Finally, the King of Saudi Arabia was joined by other heads of states at a Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Interfaith Dialogue in November 2008.

OTHER FORMAL ANTI-RADICALIZATION MEASURES

The United Nations: Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force

Saudi Arabia is a participant in the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.^{xlii} The Task Force's First Report of the Working Group on Radicalization and Extremism That Lead to Terrorism: Inventory of State Programs¹ noted of the Kingdom's counseling methods that:

- a) "Saudi Arabia separates extremist prisoners from others, going so far as to establish new and special incarceration facilities that not only separate security detainees from other regular criminals, but also separate security and violent extremist detainees from one another in individual cells."
- b) "Saudi Arabia has provided direct financial and welfare support to the victims of violent extremism, including the siblings and progeny of incarcerated or killed violent extremists in order to prevent the emergence of a new generation of extremists from related social networks".
- c) The Task Force has also commended the Kingdom's special rehabilitation program, introduced in 2006, that provides psychological counselling and religious education.

Clerical Teachings

In October 2007, the General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Ifta' created an official fatwa website to serve as the only source online for legitimate and authentic and legal fatwa. These were important steps to codify the process of

issuing religious rulings and combat the spread of extremist fatwa. Only clerics associated with the Council of Senior Scholars may issue fatwa.^{xliii}

In 2009, Sheikh Abd al-Muhsin Abd'allah Ibrahim al Sharikh, head of Al-Qa'ida's Victory Committee in Syria, and third cousin to Osama bin Laden, was placed on Saudi Arabia's 85 Most Wanted List; Sheikh Sulyaman al Uwar was arrested by Saudi authorities in 2004 for supporting al-Qa'ida, as was Sheikh Saud al Shuraya, a cleric at the Grand Mosque in Mecca.^{xliv}

The Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdelaziz bin Abdullah al Sheikh, the highest religious authority in the country (and not a part of the government), has issued a number of statements critical of terrorism. On August 19, 2014, the Grand Mufti issued a statement saying ISIL and al-Qa'ida are "Khawarij", or 'Primary Enemies,' of Islam. He declared "the ideas of extremism...and terrorism" to be the "first enemies of Muslims" and stated that all efforts to combat Al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State were required because those groups "consider Muslims to be infidels". In the spring of 2008, he issued a statement on the evils of terrorism and warned Saudi citizens not to listen to those who use religion to promote terrorism. In October 2007, he delivered a sermon cautioning young Saudis not to travel abroad to participate in jihad.

In the same speech, the Grand Mufti urged Saudi citizens not to finance terrorism and to be mindful of how their charitable contributions are distributed. Later in 2007, he stated that terrorists should be subject to severe punishment in accordance with Islamic law.^{xlv}

The vetting of religious clerics and supervision of money given to them by their communities is under strict supervision by the Kingdom. The government suspended more than 1,000 clerics through 2013 and 900 clerics up through 2014 on the grounds of "negligence" with regard to this new stringency.^{xlvi}

In 2010, the Council of Senior Ulema in Saudi Arabia, the main body of religious leadership, publicly denounced terrorism and stated that terrorism was criminal and against Islamic teachings.

External action against Daesh/ISIL was complemented by an aggressive campaign by both official clerics and the Saudi state to discredit the group and condemn their activities as acts of terrorism.

To combat ideological recruitment via educational institutions, a teacher-monitoring

process has been implemented, under which problematic teachers are sent to King Fahd Security College for re-training.

Additionally, the Kingdom has also identified those religious schools and religious teachings that are a source of extremism by prohibiting certain imams from “incitement and talk of intolerance”. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has implemented a program to educate those imams and to monitor mosques and religious education to purge extremism.

PENAL MEASURES FOR PARTICIPATION IN EXTREMIST ACTIVITY

Stricter Punishments for Extremism Participation

The Saudi government has established stricter punishments for participation in transnational terrorist group, and it has taken increased action since 2014 to prevent Saudis from travelling abroad in support of extremist groups or otherwise supporting armed extremists. For example, in May 2014, the Saudi Ministry of Interior estimated that at least 1,200 Saudis had travelled to fight in Syria, and some independent estimates suggested that the figure may be more than 2,500 Saudis. In addition:

- a) Tougher prison sentences for Saudis traveling abroad to fight with terrorist entities were imposed by royal decree in early February 2014. These sentences range from three to twenty years for participation in “extremist religious or ideological groups or those classified as terrorist organizations”.
- b) This decree was followed by the release in March 2014 of new counterterrorism regulations under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior outlawing support for terrorist organizations, including Al-Qaeda, ISIL, and the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Ban on Political Incitement

The Kingdom has cracked down on political incitement in religious teaching by banning prominent clerics and royal advisors who have used their renown to solicit aid to unidentified Syrian rebels.

In May 2012, the late King Abdullah summoned a number of prominent clerics to

Riyadh to forbid their soliciting donations for unidentified Syrian rebels. The King dismissed Abd al-Muhsin al-Ubaykan, a cleric and adviser to the royal court. Another group of clerics calling itself the 'Ulema Committee to Support Syria' announced calls for militant volunteers in Iraq and was banned by the government.

In June 2012, the government followed up on its ban on illicit donations to Syria with an edict from the Ulema Council that expressly prohibited calls for jihad in Syria outside official channels.

Prevention, Rehabilitation and Aftercare

The Saudi Ministry of Interior has initiated efforts to rehabilitate citizens convicted of terrorism-related offenses. The Prevention, Rehabilitation and Aftercare Program, deemed highly successful by American analysts, targets Islamists "who have not yet committed a terrorist act but have shown an inclination to become involved in terrorist activities". According to Saudi authorities, many of the participants had limited knowledge of Islam and were instead heavily influenced by jihadist propaganda. As of 2008, about 3,000 prisoners had participated in the program, with a recidivism rate of only one to two percent.

This psychological counterterrorism approach is based on a mix of religious education, counseling techniques, and financial incentives to help potential graduates reintegrate into society.

The indirect approach to counterterrorism by the Kingdom has sought to address the underlying factors that have facilitated extremism in the hope of preventing radical violent Islam. The goal has been the elimination of the intellectual foundations for violence committed in the name of Islam. In operation for nearly a decade, the majority of individuals released through this counseling program have not been rearrested on security offenses.

The Saudi approach has offered "a combination of force, exit options, and an aggressive information campaign which has proven very effective". The creation of exit options for militants, first introduced in mid-2004 and mid-2006, encouraged fighters to surrender with the help of influential clerics of high repute who conducted discreet mediation and counseling sessions.

IV

FIGHTING & DEFEATING DAESH





The Kingdom has unequivocally stated that its counter-terrorism and counter-extremism efforts are directed at Daesh/ISIL. The Kingdom is a part of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, taking military action in support of coalition airstrikes in Syria.

On February 4, 2016, the Kingdom announced that it was ready to send ground troops into Syria as part of military action against 'Daesh'/ISIL, if requested by the US-led coalition.^{xlvi}

The US Department of Defense has lauded Saudi participation in airstrikes against Daesh/ISIL in Syria. By February 2016, the US and coalition forces had led 10,113 strikes (6,763 in Iraq; 3,350 in Syria) against ISIL in which Saudi Arabia participated in airstrikes. These attacks produced numerous ISIL casualties and destroyed or damaged training bases, compounds, headquarters, command and control facilities, a finance center, supply trucks, and armed vehicles.^{xlvi}

US-Saudi airstrikes in Syria, targeting 'Daesh'/ISIL strongholds southwest of Kobani, resulted in the destruction of struck large ISIL units, damage to ISIL staging locations, to machine-gun firing positions, and ISIL buildings and garrisons, according to the Pentagon.

The Saudi regime has been perceived in the eyes of 'Daesh'/ISIL as their 'un-Islamic' enemy with too-close relations to the West. [The Saudis are seen as responsible for pervasive Western influence in Islamic lands and the subsequent destruction of Islamic identity.] Saudi control over Islam's two holiest religious sites, Mecca and Medina, fuels the determination of jihadi fighters to concentrate their efforts on liberating these sites from the grip of the Saudi regime. The establishment of the Najd Province by the Islamic State in 2015 on the border of Saudi Arabia indicates an intention to increase terror attacks in the Saudi Kingdom's territory, as was demonstrated by several terror attacks carried out by members of ISIL against the Shi'ite minority during 2015.

In early 2016, there was a significant increase in the rhetoric of Daesh/ ISIL activists in social media networks against the Saudi government due to the execution of dozens of jihadi fighters. Among them was a Saudi scholar of religious law, Sheikh Fares bin Ahmad al-Shuwali al-Zaharani, who was executed at the beginning of January 2016. Sheikh al-Zaharani was a prominent Al-Qa'ida ideologist who was responsible for the radicalization of young Saudis.

This discourse is characterized by the demonization of the Saudi regime, attempts to recruit Saudi civilians into the ranks of the Islamic State, and calls urging them to carry out attacks against Saudi institutions. Speeches made by the organization's leader, Sheikh Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and the organization's spokesman, Abu Muhammad al Adnani, about the importance of investing efforts in liberating Mecca and Medina were frequently posted on social media networks.

On December 31, 2015, Islamic State activists posted to Twitter a hashtag, "Saudi Arabia Executes the Honest and Righteous Religious Scholars"). Various threats about harming a number of Saudi security and royal figures were posted, and photographs of those targeted were also posted along with their names and addresses. Other activists called upon Saudi civilians to rebel against the Saudi regime through the use of weapons, knives, and Molotov cocktails.

Another hashtag was published on January 2, 2016, entitled: "On the Side of the Saudi Ministry of Internal Security", this time by supporters of Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). This also focused on a call for revenge attacks against the Saudi regime and suggested how to implement them. A post from Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula under this hashtag also made a threat to the Saudi regime on December 1, 2015, that if the latter executed prisoners affiliated with global jihad, it would suffer a hard blow.

After the execution, the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, identifying with Al-Qaeda and active in Syrian and Lebanese territories, called for Saudi civilians to join in 'jihad' combat against the Saudi regime and to assist the terrorists.

Taken from "Radicalization of Jihadi Discourse Against the Saudi Regime as Reflected in Social Media"

International Institute for Counterterrorism

DAESH/ISIL AND SAUDI INTERNAL SECURITY

The largest Daesh/ISIL networks that Saudi security forces claim to have broken up were in Riyadh and al-Qassim. The terror group has carried out between fifteen and twenty attacks against the Kingdom since November 2014.

Daesh/ISIL has declared three so-called provinces in Saudi Arabia as their own: the centrally located Najd province, the Hijaz Province in Western Arabia, and the Bahrain Province in the east. In the parlance of the group, this territory is collectively known as the “Provinces of the Land of the Two Holy Mosques”. Daesh/ISIL is a committed terrorist threat against Saudi Arabia. In May 2015, IS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi aggressively challenged Saudi credentials as defenders of Islam (and as the Custodians of the Two Holy Mosques) and Muslims in general. The Kingdom has 800 members of Daesh/ISIL in its jails. Daesh/ISIL cells have been identified in Saudi Arabia, and the US Department of State noted in a 2014 overview of international counterterrorism that Saudi security services disrupted their activities.

As of September 2015, officials in the Kingdom arrested more than 1,300 citizens and more than 300 foreigners on suspicion of connection to the Daesh/ISIL organization, reflecting the government’s firm approach to perceived domestic security threats.^{xlix}

Saudi Arabia’s actions against ISIL were complemented by an aggressive public education/ideological campaign by official clerics in the Kingdom and the Saudi state itself to discredit the group and condemn their activities as acts of terrorism.

Saudi Arabia has used the terrorist-finance provisions in its Law for Crimes of Terrorism and Terrorist-Financing to combat funding of Daesh/ISIL and other violent extremist groups in Iraq and Syria. The ISIL Counter-Finance Group was formed in early 2015 to support the efforts of the global coalition to combat ISIL, and is co-led by the Kingdom, Italy and the United States.

THE 39–STATE ISLAMIC MILITARY ALLIANCE

The establishment of this all-Muslim military coalition on December 15, 2015, was announced by Defense Minister Prince Mohammad bin Salman al Saud and is based at a joint command center in Riyadh.

The Alliance has stated that its primary objective is to protect the Islamic nations from all terrorist groups and terrorist organizations “irrespective of sect and name”

and has announced that it will fight terrorists in “Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Afghanistan”, in line with United Nations and Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) provisions on terrorism. The coalition is expected to deploy military forces into Syria to fight ‘Daesh’/ISIL.

The combined strength of the alliance is formidable, and Saudi Arabia’s partners include one Islamic nation that is equipped with nuclear weapons, Pakistan, which possesses nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles that are bolstered by land, air, and sea-based delivery systems for missile launches. Another partner, the Turkish armed forces, possesses advanced military platforms, while the United Arab Emirates is in possession of the world’s most advanced F-16s (The F-16 E/F Block 60s), a generation ahead of the fighter aircraft that form the backbone of the US Air Force.

Joint exercises prior to and as of the formal founding of the Alliance include:

- The Pakistan-Turkey joint air exercises of October 5-17, 2015
- The Pakistan-Saudi Arabia joint exercise “Al-Shihab” on October 30, 2015
- The December 26, 2015 Pakistan-Bahrain joint naval exercises “Shaheen al Jazeera”
- On January 3, 2016, additional joint exercises between the National Guard Special Operations Unit (SOU) of Bahrain and the Special Service Group (SSG) of Pakistan.

TERRORIST INCIDENTS AGAINST SAUDI ARABIA AT- TRIBUTED TO DAESH/ISIL

On 25 August, 2014, security forces arrest eight ‘Daesh’/ISIL commanders.

On 3 November 2014, a shooting carried out by ISIL at a mosque in al-Dalwa in the Eastern Province injures seven.

On 22 November 2014, a Danish citizen was shot by ISIL supporters in Riyadh.

On 5 January 2015, an attack on the ‘Judayat Aran’ border post near Iraq kills three,

including a Saudi general. Four ISIL militants are also killed.

On 29 March 2015, an ISIL-led attack on a security patrol in Western Riyadh injures two.

On 8 April 2015, an attack on a security patrol in Eastern Riyadh kills two.

On 8 May 2015, another attack on a security patrol south of Riyadh kills one.

On 22 May 2015, a suicide bomber attacks the Ali bin Abi Talib mosque in the village of al-Qudeih, in the governorate of Qatif, during Friday prayers. Twenty-one people were killed in the blast and more than eighty injured. Daesh/ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack.

On 29 May 2015, a suicide bomber blows himself up near the Imam Hussain mosque in Dammam, about 70 kilometers from the Arabian Gulf, killing four people. The bomber attempted to enter the mosque during Friday prayers and detonated the bomb in a parking lot after having been stopped by security guards. Daesh/ISIL claimed the attack to have been carried out by one of their "soldiers of the Caliphate".

On 4 July 2015, a shoot-out during a raid in Taif kills one officer and one militant. Three others are arrested.

On 14 July 2015, a shoot-out during a raid near Abha kills one militant and his father. The attack itself injures two individuals.

On 16 July 2015, an ISIL militant murders a relative in the security forces, then detonates a suicide bomb at a checkpoint in Riyadh, injuring two.

On 6 August 2015, a suicide bombing at a mosque of the Saudi Emergency Force in Asir kills 15 and injures 33.

On 23 September 2015, two militants kill a relative in the security forces in a filmed shooting. They also kill two civilians and one police officer outside of police stations.

On 26 September 2015, security forces kill two alleged Daesh/ISIL militants.

On 15 October 2015, a shooting attack at a mosque in Sayhat in the Eastern Province kills five and injures nine.

On 26 October 2015, a suicide bomber kills two and wounded many others in a

Shi'ite Ismaili mosque in the southern city of Najran. The bomber is a Saudi national who recently returned to the country after having fought for 'Daesh'/ISIL in Syria.

On 28 January 2016, security forces arrest a total of 33 militants in Saudi Arabia allegedly affiliated with Daesh/ISIL, including nine United States nationals and three Yemenis.

On 8 February 2016, Daesh/ISIL claims responsibility for a car bomb explosion in the Al-Aziz district of Riyadh, reportedly targeted at members of the Saudi armed forces.

On 15 February 2016, ISIL militants kill a retired security official in Saudi Arabia's Jizan Province.¹

On 5 April 2016, a senior Saudi security officer is killed in the al-Dawami district outside of Riyadh; 'Daesh'/ISIL claims responsibility.



V

CHRONOLOGY OF SAUDI
COUNTERTERRORISM
ARRESTS & INCIDENTS

2003 – 2016

2003

May—Three clerics, Ali Fahd Al Khudair, Ahmed Hamoud Mufreh Al Khaledi, and Nasir Ahmed Al Fuhaid, were arrested after calling for support of the terrorists who carried out the May 12 attacks on residential compounds in Riyadh. In November 2003, Ali Fahd Al Khudair recanted his religious opinions on Saudi TV. Shortly thereafter, a second cleric, Nasir Ahmed Al Fuhaid, recanted and withdrew his religious opinions, describing them as a “grave mistake”. On December 16, 2003, Ahmed Hamoud Mufreh al Khaledi became the third cleric to recant on national television.

May 27-28—Eleven suspects were taken into custody in Medina. Weapons, false identity cards, and bomb-making materials were confiscated. In addition, Saudi national Abdulmonim Ali Mahfouz al-Ghamdi was arrested following a car chase.

May 31—Major Al-Qa’ida operational planner and fundraiser Yousif Salih Fahad Al Ayeeri, aka “Swift Sword,” was killed while fleeing from a security patrol.

June 14—Security forces raided a terrorist cell in the Alattas building in the Khalidiya neighborhood of Mecca. Two Saudi police officers and five suspects were killed in a shootout. Twelve suspects were arrested.

June 26—Top Al-Qa’ida operative Ali Abdulrahman Said Alfagsi Al-Ghamdi, aka Abu Bakr Al-Azdi, surrendered to Saudi authorities. Al-Ghamdi was suspected of being one of the masterminds of the May 12 bombings in Riyadh.

July 3—Top Al-Qa’ida operative Turki Nasser Mishaal Aldandany was killed in a gun battle with security forces, along with three other suspects. Aldandany was one of the masterminds of the May 12 bombings in Riyadh.

July 21—The Ministry of the Interior announced that Saudi authorities had thwarted imminent terrorist operations against vital installations and arrested 16 members of a number of terrorist cells in the Riyadh, Qassim, and Eastern provinces. In addition, underground storage facilities were found containing bags, weighing more than 20 tons, filled with chemicals used in the making of explosives.

July 25—Three men were arrested at a checkpoint in Mecca for possessing printed material that included a “religious edict” in support of terrorist acts against Western targets.

July 28—Security forces killed six terrorist suspects and injured one in a gunfight at a farm in Qassim Province. Two security officers were killed and eight suffered minor injuries. Four people who harbored the suspects were arrested.

September 23—Security forces surrounded a group of suspected terrorists in an apartment in Jizan. During a gun battle, one security officer was killed and four were injured. Two suspects were arrested and one was killed.

October 5—Security forces arrested three suspects during a raid in the desert east of Riyadh.

October 8—Security forces arrested a suspect during a raid on a farm in the northern Muleda area of Qassim Province. Two security officers were injured.

October 20—Security forces raided several terrorist cells in various parts of the country, including the city of Riyadh, the Al Majma District in Riyadh Province, Mecca Province, and Jiddah District of Mecca Province, and Qassim Province.

November 3—Saudi Police arrested six suspected Al-Qa'ida militants after a shootout in Mecca. The raid on an apartment triggered a shootout that left two suspected terrorists dead and one security officer wounded.

November 6—Security forces investigating a suspected terrorist cell in the Al-Suwaidi district of Riyadh came under fire from the suspects, who attempted to flee while attacking security forces. In the exchange of fire, one terrorist was killed and eight security officers suffered minor injuries. On the same day, in the Al-Sharia district of Mecca, two terrorist suspects, surrounded by security forces, used homemade bombs to blow themselves up.

November 20—Wanted terror suspect Abdullah bin Atiyyah bin Hudeid Al-Salami surrendered to security authorities.

November 25—Two wanted terror suspects were killed in a foiled car bomb plot in Riyadh. Adbulmohsin Abdulaziz Alshabanat was killed in the exchange of fire and Mo-saed Mohammad Dheedan Alsobaiee committed suicide by detonating the hand grenade he was carrying.

November 26—A suspected terrorist was arrested. The suspect's hiding place was linked to the terrorist cell involved in the November 9 car bombing at the Al-Muhaya residential complex in Riyadh. Items discovered by security forces include one

SAM-7 surface-to-air missile, five rocket-propelled grenade launchers, 846 pounds of the explosive RDX, 89 detonators, 20 hand grenades, eight AK-47 assault rifles, 41 AK-47 magazines, and 16,800 rounds of ammunition. Also recovered were four wireless communication devices, three computers, computer disks and CDs the equivalent of about \$25,000 cash, as well as numerous identity cards and leaflets calling for the perpetration of acts of terror.

December 6—The Ministry of Interior published the names and photos of 26 suspects wanted by security forces in connection with the terrorist incidents that had taken place in the Kingdom in the past few months, urging them to surrender to the authorities. Immediate financial rewards of up to \$1.9 million were offered for information leading to the arrest of these suspects.

December 8—Security forces killed Ibrahim Mohammad Abdullah Alrayis, #17 on Saudi Arabia's 26 most-wanted list of terrorist suspects.

December 30—Mansoor Mohammad Ahmad Fageeh, #16 on Saudi Arabia's 26 most-wanted list, surrendered to security authorities.

2004

January 12—The Ministry of the Interior announced that large quantities of ammunition and weapons had been seized over the past six months. The total weight of confiscated explosives was 26.3 tons. In addition, 301 rocket-propelled grenades and launchers, 431 homemade grenades, 304 explosive belts, 674 detonators, 1,020 small arms and 352,398 rounds of ammunition were confiscated.

January 30—Security forces stormed a rest house in the Al Siliye district in the east of Riyadh, arrested seven suspects, and seized armaments, military uniforms, and ammunition.

February 22—The Ministry of Interior confirmed the death of A'amir Mohsin Moreef Al Zaidan Alshihri, #15 on the 26 most wanted list. He died sometime after being wounded during a clash with police in Riyadh on November 6, 2003.

March 15—Security forces killed Khalid Ali Ali-Hajj, #9 on the 26 most-wanted list. Ali-Hajj was a Yemeni national who trained at Al-Qa'ida camps in Afghanistan, where he worked closely with Osama bin Laden. Security forces searched his car and found six hand grenades, two Kalashnikov assault rifles, 10 Kalashnikov ammunition magazines, three 9-mm pistols and the equivalent of about \$137,000 in cash.

April 12—One security officer was killed and four slightly wounded during a shootout with a group of suspects in the Al-Fayha suburb of Riyadh. One suspect was killed. As a result of this incident, security forces seized two trucks loaded with 4.5 tons of explosives ready for detonation and a car full of weapons. Eight suspects were arrested in connection with these events.

April 13—Four security officers were killed by an unknown gunman in two separate confrontations along the Riyadh-Qassim highway. The security officers killed were Captain Talal bin Abdulrahman Al-Manei, Sergeant Jarullah bin Ali Al-Jarullah, Sergeant Turki bin Mohammed Al-Otaibi and Corporal Salim bin Rasheed Al-Mousa.

April 22—Five terror suspects were killed following a shootout with security forces in the Al-Safa neighborhood in Jeddah. Four were on the 26 most-wanted list: Ahmad Abdulrahman Saqr Alfadhli, #23; Khalid Mobarak Habeeb-Allah Alqurashi, #11; Mostafa Ibrahim Mohammad Mobaraki, #25; and Talal A'nbar Ahmad A'nbari, #13.

May 1—Four terrorists were killed after carrying out an attack in Yanbu that left 8 people dead and 20 others wounded. Four belonged to one family: Sameer Sulaiman Alansari; Sami Sulaiman Alansari, Ayman Abdulqader Alsari and Mustafa Abdulqader Abed Alansari.

May 20—Security forces killed four terrorist suspects and injured another in a gunfight in Qassim Province. Two security officers were killed.

May 29—Two suspects were killed in a terrorist attack on an office compound and residential complex in Al-Khobar. The attack resulted in the deaths of 22 people, including one American and three Saudis. Security forces rescued 41 hostages in that incident. One of the four terrorists was wounded and apprehended.

June 18—Abdulaziz Abdulmohsen Almughrin, leader of the Saudi Al-Qa'ida group and #3 on the 26 most-wanted list, was killed in a siege in the Maalaz area of Riyadh. Almughrin was also responsible for the brutal murder of US hostage Paul Johnson. Three other suspects were killed in the siege: Faisal bin Abdulrahman Al-Dakheel, #5 on the 26 most wanted list; Turki bin Fahad Al-Mutairi, and Ibrahim bin Abdullah

Al-Duraihem. One security officer was killed and two others were wounded. Found at the scene were three cars, one of which had been used in an attack on a BBC journalist and his photographer.

June 23—In a televised address read on behalf of King Fahd bin Abdul-Aziz by Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz, the government offered those involved in terrorist activities a final opportunity to repent and voluntarily surrender within one month, or face resolute and determined force. Whoever surrendered would be assured due process in accordance with Sharia (Islamic Law).

Hours later, Sa'aban bin Mohammad bin Abdullah Al-Lailahi Al-Shihri, wanted for the past two years, became the first militant to accept the offer and surrender to authorities. On June 28, 2004, Osman Hadi Al Maqboul Almardy Alomary became the second to do so; he was #10 on Saudi Arabia's 26 most-wanted list.

June 30—A terrorist was killed in a shootout in Riyadh. He was later identified as Fahd bin Ali Aldakheel Algablan. Security forces seized a laboratory for preparing explosive devices and equipment for forging documents, in addition to weapons such as Kalashnikovs.

July 1—Terrorist Awad bin Mohammed bin Ali Al-Awad, wanted for his involvement in the April 12 shootout in Riyadh, was killed. Another suspect, Abdulrahman bin Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Abdulwahab, was arrested after being identified as wanted in connection with the murder of a German resident in Riyadh on May 22. A security officer, Private Muslih bin Saad Al-Qarni, was killed in this incident.

July 3—The Ministry of Interior confirmed the deaths of two militants on the 26 most-wanted list. Rakan Muhsin Mohammed Alsaykhan, #6 and Nasir Rashid Nasir Alrashid, #4 died of wounds received in the April 12 shootout in the Riyadh suburb of Al-Fayhaa.

July 13—Top Al-Qa'ida suspect Khalid bin Odeh bin Mohammed Al-Harbi, also known as Abu Sulaiman Al-Makki, surrendered to Saudi authorities at the Saudi Embassy in Iran and was later transported to Saudi Arabia

July 17—Ibrahim Al-Sadiq Al-Bakri Al-Qaidi arrived in the Kingdom from Damascus, where he had surrendered to the Saudi Embassy as part of the grace period offered by King Fahd bin Abdulaziz.

July 20—In a raid on a suspected hideout in Riyadh, security forces killed two suspects, including Isa Saad Mohammad bin O'oshan, #19 on Saudi Arabia's 26

most-wanted list. Recovered during the raid were the partial remains of Mr. Paul Marshall Johnson Jr., the American who was kidnapped and murdered by Al-Qa'ida in June 2004.

July 22—Fayez bin Rasheed bin Mohammad Al-Khashman Al-Dossary surrendered to security authorities in Taif as part of a grace period offered by King Fahd bin Abdul-Aziz.

August 5—Faris Ahmad Jamaan Al Showwel Alzahrani, one of the leaders of the group that had been calling for terrorist attacks, was arrested.

August 11—Abdulrahman bin Obaid-Allah Al-Harbi was killed in the vicinity of the Holy Mosque in Mecca after he attacked security officers who were trying to apprehend him. He was wanted for his involvement with an extremist group and the manufacturing of explosives.

August 30—Security forces in the Eastern Province were carrying out investigations when a car containing four persons tried to break through security barriers. In the ensuing exchange of fire, one of the attackers was killed and three others were wounded and arrested. The search operation also led to the arrest of another suspect and the seizure of two vehicles that had been under surveillance.

September 2—The Ministry of Interior announced that Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz bin Ahmed Al-Mughrin had voluntarily surrendered to security authorities. He was wanted for his involvement in setting up an Al-Qa'ida cell in the Eastern Province. Three of the cell's members were also arrested. The cell was suspected of carrying out the attack in Al-Khobar on May 30, 2004.

September 3—One security officer, Yousef bin Ayed Al-Harbi, was killed and three were injured during operations in Buraidah. Surveillance of a suspected residence and a vehicle led to an exchange of fire between security forces and another vehicle. After a pursuit through a residential neighborhood, the driver of the second vehicle was killed and another individual involved in the incident was arrested.

September 5—Three security officers, Sergeant Mufleh Saad Ruweishid Al-Rasheedi, Sergeant Sayer Farhan Ghanim Al-Nomasi and Murif Shakir Eid Al-Rasheedi, were killed when their car caught fire after being hit by gunfire while pursuing a suspect vehicle. The officers were part of a security force carrying out operations in the southern part of the city of Buraidah. Seven militants were arrested in the operation.

September 23—Security forces arrested a wanted suspect in Tabuk without resistance. The suspect had confirmed links to a militant who was injured and arrested in Tabuk three days before. Three security officers were wounded in the incident.

October 12—Security forces killed three terrorist suspects, including Abdulmajeed Mohammad Abdullah Almonea, #1 on the Kingdom's 26 most-wanted list. Seven security officers were wounded during the encounter.

November 9—During a raid in the Al-Jammah district of Jeddah, one wanted suspect was killed and three others were captured.

November 16—Security forces arrested a number of terrorist suspects following a fire-fight in the suburbs of Unayzah in Qassim Province. One security officer was killed and eight were injured.

November 27—A suspect killed by security officers in Jeddah in the university district was identified as Isam Saddeq Qasim Mobaraki.

December 6—Explosives were thrown at the gate of the US Consulate in Jeddah, which was briefly breached. Security forces took immediate action and four of the five assailants were killed, while a fifth was arrested.

December 28—A wanted suspect was killed and another was wounded and arrested in a clash with a security patrol in Riyadh. One security officer was injured and a bystander was killed in the incident.

December 29, 2004-January 3, 2005—Fifteen terrorists were killed during December 29 car bomb attacks on the Interior Ministry, the Emergency Special Forces Headquarters in Riyadh, and in shootouts in connection with the incident. Among those killed were Sultan Bjad So'doon Alotaibi and Bandar Abdulrahman Abdullah Aldakeheel, #26, and #7, respectively, on the Kingdom's 26 most wanted list.

2005

January 9—Security forces killed four terrorist suspects in a shootout in the Nafud Al-Howairat desert, about 50 miles from Al-Zilfi in the north of Riyadh Province.

April 3-5—Fifteen suspects were killed in a three-day shootout in Ar-Ras, Qassim Province. Saud Homood Obaid Alqotaini Alotaibi, a Saudi, and Kareem Altohami Almojati, a Moroccan, were #20 and #12, respectively, on the 26 most wanted list of December 6, 2003. Five injured suspects were arrested; a sixth surrendered and was also arrested.

April 6—Security forces shot and killed Abdulrahman Mohammad Yazji, #24 on the 26 most-wanted list. Found hiding in the Al-Sinayah industrial area in the city of Riyadh, he opened fire on security officers. An associate with him was wounded and arrested.

April 21—Security forces killed two wanted suspects and arrested two more. Two security officers were killed in the incident and four were slightly injured.

May 9—Wanted militant Abdul-Aziz bin Rasheed bin Hamdan Altowaile'i Ala'nezi was wounded and arrested.

June 15—The Ministry of Interior reported security forces had arrested five individuals, all of Chadian nationality, suspected of terrorist activity including efforts to finance an Al-Qa'ida cell by carrying out a series of armed robberies in Jeddah over a two-month period in 2004.

June 21—Two militants suspected of the June 18 murder in Mecca of a security officer, Major General Mubarak Al-Sawwat, were killed in a shootout with security forces in Jeddah.

June 28—The Ministry of Interior issued a new most-wanted list, naming 36 militants wanted by the security forces in connection with terrorist incidents and urging them to surrender to authorities. Most of those named were Saudi nationals; there were seven non-Saudis.

July 1—Fayez Ibrahim Omer Ayyoub, #29 on the Kingdom's list of 36 most-wanted suspects, surrendered to Saudi authorities upon his return to Saudi Arabia.

July 3—Security forces killed Younis Mohammed Ibrahim Alhayari, a Moroccan national who was #1 on Saudi Arabia's most-wanted list. Alhayari was considered an expert in explosives and was directly involved in terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia.

July 9—Saudi security authorities announced that Yemeni national Zaid Hasan Mohammed Hamed, #21 on the Kingdom's 36 most-wanted list, was in detention in Yemen under the name Zaid Hasan Omar Al-Ju'eidi'.

July 25—Security forces arrested Mohammed Saeed Mohammed Alsiyan Alamri,

#10 on the 36 most-wanted list. The arrest was a direct result of information provided by citizens.

August 18—Three terrorists were killed in raids in Riyadh and Medina. One of them, who blew himself up in Riyadh, was identified as Majed Hamid Abdullah Alhasiri; he was #14 on the Kingdom's 36 most-wanted list. One security officer, Lance-Corporal Muhammad bin Moawadh Al-Shamani Al-Harbi, was killed and another was injured in the raids.

September 4-7—Four militants on Saudi Arabia's 36 most-wanted list were killed in a security operation in Dammam. They were identified as #3, Zaid Saad Zaid Al-sammari; #5, Salih Mansour Mohsin Alfiraidi Alharbi; #6, Sultan Salih Hosan Alhasri; and #13, Naif Farhan Jalal Aljihaishi Alshammari. Four security officers were killed and others were wounded.

November 8—The Ministry of Interior announced that Adnan Abdullah Faris Alamri Alshareer, a Saudi and #23 on the 36 most-wanted list, was taken into custody. The Ministry of Interior reported that Saudi security forces arrested seventeen suspected Al-Qa'ida terrorists in simultaneous raids throughout the Kingdom. Some of the suspects participated in Al-Qa'ida terrorist acts, while others were suspected of collaborating with the group.

December 27—Two most-wanted terrorist suspects were killed in related incidents in Qassim Province. Mohammed Abdulrahman Alsuwailmi, #7; and Abdulrahman Salih Abdulrahman Almit'eb, #4, were on the Kingdom's 36-most-wanted list. Five security personnel were also killed.

2006

January 17—The Ministry of Interior reported that five men suspected of planning terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia were arrested.

February 24-27—Five suspects on the Kingdom's list of 36 most wanted were killed. Mohammed bin Saleh bin Mohammed Al-Ghaith, #8, and Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Ibrahim Al-Tuwaijri, #9, were killed during a failed attack on the Abqaiq oil facility on February 24. A follow-up raid on an Al-Qa'ida safe house in Riyadh on February 27 resulted in the deaths of Al-Qa'ida's leader in Saudi

Arabia, Fahd Farraj Mohammed Aljuwair, # 2, Ibrahim Abdullah Ibrahim Almateer, #11, and Abdullah Mohayya Shalash Asilaiti Alshammari, #15. Two additional militants were also killed in the Riyadh raid.

April 18—The Ministry of Interior stated that Saudi security forces arrested five militants in connection with the failed Abqaiq oil facility attack on February 24, 2006.

May 9-23—Saudi security forces arrested twenty-seven suspected Al-Qa'ida terrorists in raids throughout the Kingdom.

May 12—Occupants of a car fired on the US Consulate in Jeddah. Security forces apprehended the armed individual later identified as Muhammad bin Abdelraziq Saad Faidi Al-Ghamidi.

June 23—Saudi security forces killed six Al-Qa'ida militants and arrested one militant in a raid in Riyadh's Al-Nakheel neighborhood. Information obtained during the raid also resulted in the arrests of two additional suspected militants with direct links to the group. One security member, Abdulrahman bin Hassan Al-Shehri, was killed and several others were injured.

December 2—Saudi security forces arrested 136 suspected militants over a period of several months, according to the Ministry of Interior. On December 3, Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz said that these militants belonging to terrorist cells had planned assassinations and terrorist operations inside Saudi Arabia.

2007

February 2—Security forces arrested 10 people suspected of raising and smuggling funds for militant groups. The suspects were illegally collecting donations, smuggling the money to “suspected parties,” and using the funds to recruit youths to go to “unstable regions”.

April 6—Walid Mutlaq Al-Raddadi, #12 on the Kingdom's 36 most-wanted list published in June 28, 2005, was killed in a gun battle with security forces near Medina, resulting in the deaths of two security officers and injuries to two more. Al-Raddadi was also a suspect in

the February 26, 2007, murder of four French citizens.

April 27—The Ministry of Interior announced the arrests of 172 militants who were planning major terrorist attacks both in Saudi Arabia and abroad. The massive security sweep resulted in the seizure of arms, more than \$5 million in cash, documents, and computers.

October 14—Saudi authorities arrested Abdullah Al-Mohammadi, the fourth and final suspect wanted in the February 26, 2007 killings of four French nationals in southwestern Saudi Arabia. Two other suspects were arrested earlier in the year—Majed al-Harbi on May 27, 2007, and Nasser Al-Balawi in July 2007. The suspected mastermind of the murders, Walid Al-Raddadi, was killed during a gun battle with Saudi security forces on April 6.

November 28—Saudi security forces arrested 208 suspected militants planning a series of attacks within the Kingdom, according to the Ministry of Interior. Of the 208 captured, eight were plotting an attack on an auxiliary oil installation in Eastern Province, twenty-two had planned assassinations of Muslim scholars and security forces, eighteen plotted to smuggle rockets into Saudi Arabia with the intention of carrying out terrorist operations, 112 were suspected of associating with terrorist cells abroad, thirty-two provided financial support to terrorism, and sixteen were arrested in Medina for promoting and supporting terrorism.

December 15-23— Saudi authorities arrested twenty-eight suspected Al-Qa'ida militants who planned to carry out attacks in Saudi Arabia and were linked to militants abroad.

2008

March 3—Saudi authorities arrested 28 suspected Al-Qa'ida militants of different nationalities, the Ministry of Interior announced. Evidence revealed that the militants were attempting to rebuild Al-Qa'ida to relaunch a terror campaign in Saudi Arabia.

2009

January 9—An announcement was made that Al-Qa'ida groups in Yemen and Saudi Arabia were merging their operations under the leadership of Nasir al-Wuhayshi. The new group, Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), consisted of Al-Qa'ida in Yemen and the Saudi Al-Qa'ida and had a Saudi deputy, Abu-Sayyaf al Shihri.

February 2—The Saudi Ministry of the Interior issued a list of its 85 most-wanted suspects living abroad, including six Saudis released from the Guantánamo Bay Detention Camp. Of the 85 people, 83 are Saudis and two are Yemenis.

February 16—Mohamed Atiq Awayd Al Harbi, otherwise known as Al Awfi, a former Guantánamo detainee, turned himself into the Yemeni authorities in Sana'a and was flown to Riyadh a week after his name appeared on the 85 most-wanted list. The Saudi Minister of the Interior stated: "The return of Awfi proves the effectiveness of the rehabilitation program that the Interior Ministry carries out. The program is capable of helping those (ex-militants) release the truth that they were being abused by terrorist groups."

2010

The State Department noted in particular of that year: "While Saudi Arabia remained vulnerable because of increased instability in Yemen, the efforts to target terrorist activity domestically remained resolute; the Saudi government displayed professionalism in tactical counter terrorism operations and counterterrorist financing and made some progress on its efforts to counter violent extremist ideology."

US Department of State Country Report on Terrorism for 2010

On March 24, Saudi officials announced the arrest of more than 100 Al-Qa'ida suspects since November 2009. Those arrested were accused of planning attacks against gov-

ernment and oil installations in the Kingdom. They included 47 Saudis, 51 Yemenis, one Somali, one Bangladeshi, and one Eritrean. During the arrest, police seized weapons, ammunition, video recording devices, computers, and money. In this operation, security officers also uncovered two six-member suicide bombing cells linked to AQAP. All twelve members were arrested, as these were in the early stages of planning attacks against oil and security facilities in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia.

On October 29, Saudi Arabia intercepted two mail bombs destined for the United States based on timely information.

On November 26, Saudi officials announced that 149 Al-Qa'ida suspects had been arrested since April 2010. These suspects had been part of 19 cells across Saudi Arabia and included 124 Saudis. The suspects allegedly planned to poison Saudi officials and journalists with gifts of perfume and build explosive devices from mobile phones.

In 2010, Saudi authorities reiterated their offer, first made in 2003, of one million riyals (approx. \$270,000) to anyone who supplied info that leads to the arrest of a terrorist, five million riyals (approximately \$1.4 million) to anyone who supplied information about a terrorist cell, seven million riyals, (or approximately \$1.9 million), for anyone supplying information to foil a terror attack.

2011

In January, Saudi authorities announced the arrest of 765 people during the previous Hijri year (December 18, 2009-December 6, 2010) for involvement in terrorist activities.

In November, another special criminal court convicted a group of 16 men of terrorism, sedition and other crimes, and sentenced the defendants to prison terms ranging from five to 30 years. At the end of the year, trials were still ongoing in the case of eleven defendants accused of participating in a 2004 terrorist attack on the Red Sea port of Yanbu and in the case against 85 defendants belonging to the AQAP-affiliated Dandani cell (named after founder Turki al-Dandani and believed

to be responsible for establishing terrorist cells throughout the country.) These 85 defendants were accused of planning and executing attacks on residential compounds in Riyadh in 2003.

2012

On April 4, the specialized criminal court began the public trial of a group dubbed the “Cell of 55” (composed of 54 Saudis and one Yemeni), allegedly responsible for the 2004 attack on the US consulate in Jeddah.

The trial of eleven Saudis linked to the May 2004 attack on a refinery in Yanbu, in which two American citizens were killed, continued in 2012.

In August, Saudi authorities announced they had discovered and partially rounded up two separate terrorist cells, one in Riyadh and one in Jeddah, affiliated with Al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula.

October 14, Saudi security forces in Jizan province killed two Yemeni nationals who attempted to pass a checkpoint with explosives and four suicide vests for use in “imminent attacks against vital targets,” according to an official statement.

On November 5, eleven former prisoners who recently had been released after having served their sentences for terrorism-related offenses attacked and killed two Saudi border guards who attempted to stop the former prisoners from crossing into Yemen near Shraurah in Najran province. The group, consisting of ten Saudis and one Yemeni, was subsequently arrested.

2013

In 2013, the government pursued convictions of terrorism supporters, including prosecuting a religious cleric who issued fatwas allowing suicide operations outside the Kingdom.

On September 25, Saudi courts convicted three Saudi nationals on charges related to coordinating the sending of youths to participate in violent extremism in conflict areas. Saudi prosecutors also convicted one of the three defendants of preparing to conduct a suicide operation.

On October 1, the specialized criminal court in Riyadh convicted 19 members of a group of 63 defendants on various terrorism charges.

2014

On July 14, AQAP targeted a Saudi border checkpoint in Sharurah near the Yemeni border, which resulted in the death of four Saudi security officers and five AQAP assailants.

On August 25, security forces arrest eight 'Daesh'/ISIL commanders.

On October 14, two American contractors working in Saudi Arabia were shot at a gas station in Riyadh by a dual Saudi/US national. There were indications that extremist propaganda influenced the attacker, a former employee of the victims' organization.

On November 3, a group of gunmen killed five Saudi nationals and wounded nine others in the town of al-Dalwah in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province. The Saudi government has alleged that the gunmen had ties to ISIL.

On November 22, a Danish national survived being shot three times by three assailants who were arrested by Saudi authorities on December 11. Initial Saudi investigations determined that the three Saudi attackers had unspecified links to ISIL.

2015

On January 5, an attack on the 'Judayat Aran' border post near Iraq killed three, including a Saudi general. Four ISIL militants were also killed.

On March 29, an ISIL-led attack on security patrol in Western Riyadh injured two.

On April 8, an attack on a security patrol in eastern Riyadh killed two.

On May 8, another attack on security patrol south of Riyadh kills one; the killing is attributed to 'Daesh'/ISIL.

On May 22, a suicide bomber attacked the Ali bin Abi Talib Mosque in the village of al-Qudeih in the governorate of Qatif during Friday prayers. Twenty-one people were killed and more than eighty were injured in the blast. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack.

On May 29, a suicide bomber blew himself up near the Imam Hussain Shi'ite mosque in Dammam, a coastal city near the Persian Gulf, killing four people. The bomber attempted to enter the mosque during Friday prayers and detonated the bomb in a parking lot after having been stopped by security guards. ISIL proclaimed that one of their "soldiers of the Caliphate" was responsible for the attack.

July 4: A shoot-out during a raid in Taif killed one officer and one militant, three others arrested.

July 14: A shoot out during a raid near Abha kills one militant and his father; injures two.

July 16: An ISIL militant murdered a relative in the security forces, then detonates a suicide bomb at a checkpoint at in Riyadh injuring two.

On August 6, seventeen people were killed by a suicide bomb at the Great Mosque of Abha, the capital of the southwestern province of Asir. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack.

September 23, 2015: Two militants killed a relative in the security forces in filmed shooting. They also killed two civilians and one police officer outside of police stations.

On September 26, 2015 security forces killed two alleged 'Daesh'/ISIL militants.

October 15, 2015: A shooting attack at a mosque in Sayhat in the Eastern Province kills five, injures nine.

On October 26, a suicide bomber killed and wounded two people in a Shi'ite Ismaili mosque in the southern city of Najran. The bombing was carried out by a Saudi national who had recently returned to the country after having fought for ISIL in Syria.

Additionally, in 2015, with assistance from the Kingdom, the US Treasury Department designated the following ISIL officials and financial facilitators: Hasan al Salahayn Salih al Sha'ari, Ali Musa al Shawakh, Tarad Mohammad Aljarba, Morad Laaboudi, Mu'tasim Yahya Ali al Rumaysh, Mounir Ben Dhaou Ben Brahim Ben Helal, Sami Jasim Muhammad al Jaburi, Tuah Febriwansyah, Muhammad Sholeh Ibrahim, Nasir Muhammad Awad al Ghidani al Harbi, Hafiz Saeed Khan, Muwaffaq Mustafa Muhammad al Kar-mush, Barjo Ikanovic, Aqsa Mahmood and Omar Hussain. Many of these individuals are included on the UN Sanctions list.

2016

On January 28, security forces arrested a total of 33 militants in Saudi Arabia allegedly affiliated with 'Daesh'/ISIL, including nine United States nationals and three Yemenis.

On January 29, a suicide bombing killed four people at the Al-Ahsa mosque in eastern Saudi Arabia. ISIL claims responsibility.

On February 8, Daesh/ISIL claimed responsibility for a car bomb explosion in the Al-Aziziya district of Riyadh, reportedly targeted at members of the Saudi armed forces.

On February 15, ISIL militants killed a retired security official in Saudi Arabia's Jizan Province.

On April 2, an IED killed a man and damaged three police vehicles after being detonated at a parking lot next to a police station in the town of Al-Dilam, located 100 km south of Riyadh.

On April 5, a senior Saudi security officer was killed in a town west of Riyadh; Da'esh/ISIL claimed responsibility.

Appendices





I

SAUDI ARABIA & IRAN

Can Iran Change?

By Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir | The New York Times | Jan. 19, 2016

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia — THE world is watching Iran for signs of change, hoping it will evolve from a rogue revolutionary state into a respectable member of the international community. But Iran, rather than confronting the isolation it has created for itself, opts to obscure its dangerous sectarian and expansionist policies, as well as its support for terrorism, by leveling unsubstantiated charges against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It is important to understand why Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies are committed to resisting Iranian expansion and responding forcefully to Iran's acts of aggression.

Superficially, Iran may appear to have changed. We acknowledge Iran's initial actions regarding the agreement to suspend its program to develop a nuclear weapon. Certainly, we know that a large segment of the Iranian population wants greater openness internally and better relations with neighboring countries and the world. But the government does not.

The Iranian government's behavior has been consistent since the 1979 revolution. The constitution that Iran adopted states the objective of exporting the revolution. As a consequence, Iran has supported violent extremist groups, including Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen and sectarian militias in Iraq. Iran or its proxies have been blamed for terrorist attacks around the world, including the bombings of the United States Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983 and the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, and the assassinations in the Mykonos restaurant in Berlin in 1992. And by some estimates Iranian-backed forces have killed over 1,100 American troops in Iraq since 2003.

Iran uses attacks on diplomatic sites as an instrument of its foreign policy. The 1979 takeover of the American Embassy in Tehran was only the beginning. Since then, embassies of Britain, Denmark, Kuwait, France, Russia and Saudi Arabia have been at-

tacked in Iran or abroad by Iranian proxies. Foreign diplomats and domestic political opponents have been assassinated around the world.

Hezbollah, Iran's surrogate, tries to control Lebanon and wages war against the Syrian opposition — and in the process helps the Islamic State flourish. It is clear why Iran wants Bashar al-Assad of Syria to remain in power: In its 2014 report on terrorism, the State Department wrote that Iran views Syria “as a crucial causeway to its weapons supply route to Hezbollah.” The report also noted, citing United Nations data, that Iran provided arms, financing and training “to support the Assad regime’s brutal crackdown that has resulted in the deaths of at least 191,000 people.” The same report for 2012 noted that there was “a marked resurgence of Iran’s state sponsorship of terrorism,” with Iranian and Hezbollah’s terrorist activity “reaching a tempo unseen since the 1990s.”

In Yemen, Iran’s support for the takeover of the country by the Houthi militia helped cause the war that has killed thousands.

While Iran claims its top foreign policy priority is friendship, its behavior shows the opposite is true. Iran is the single-most-belligerent-actor in the region, and its actions display both a commitment to regional hegemony and a deeply held view that conciliatory gestures signal weakness either on Iran’s part or on the part of its adversaries.

In that vein, Iran tested a ballistic missile on Oct. 10, just months after reaching an agreement on its nuclear program, in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions. In December, an Iranian military ship fired a missile near American and French vessels in international waters. Even since signing the nuclear accord, the supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has defended the country’s ubiquitous slogan “Death to America.”

Saudi Arabia will not allow Iran to undermine our security or the security of our allies. We will push back against attempts to do so.

In an outlandish lie, Iran maligns and offends all Saudis by saying that my nation, home of the two holy mosques, brainwashes people to spread extremism. We are not the country designated a state sponsor of terrorism; Iran is. We are not the nation under international sanctions for supporting terrorism; Iran is. We are not the nation whose officials are on terrorism lists; Iran is. We don’t have an agent sentenced to jail for 25 years by a New York federal court for plotting to assassinate an ambassador in Washington in 2011; Iran does.

Saudi Arabia has been a victim of terrorism, often at the hands of Iran’s allies. Our

country is on the front line of fighting terrorism, working closely with our allies. Saudi Arabia has arrested thousands of terrorism suspects and prosecuted hundreds. Our fight against terrorism is continuing as we lead multinational efforts to pursue those who participate in terrorist activities, those who fund them and those who foment the mind-set that promotes extremism.

The real question is whether Iran wants to live by the rules of the international system, or remain a revolutionary state committed to expansion and to defiance of international law. In the end, we want an Iran that works to solve problems in a way that allows people to live in peace. But that will require major changes in Iran's policy and behavior. We have yet to see that.

Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir is the foreign minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

II

SAUDI ARABIA & TERROR-FINANCE

The Saudi Success against the Terror-Finance Network

No international military campaign against 'Daesh'/ISIL will succeed in eradicating that terror-state without an effective intelligence apparatus to target its most elusive source of power: local and national networks of underground terrorist-financing. This most covert dimension of non-state actor support for terrorism, and of the mindset that can call such support "charity" or "humanitarian aid", has been a plague to Islamic societies for decades, making the likes of Hezbollah, Hamas, Al-Qa'ida and now ISIL possible.

It should perhaps come as some surprise, then, that the one country at the forefront of the counterterrorism campaign against such illicit money-networks is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. No other country has put more comprehensive laws into place with regard to money-laundering, to suspicious transactions, or to the elimination of dubious "money-exchange" bureaus than Riyadh, as part of an all-over national crack-down against the men, the money and the mindset of terrorism.

The Kingdom's efforts have been duly praised by the United States Department of the Treasury and by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Since 2003, this latter agency along with the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigative Division have provided Saudi Arabia with counterterrorist financing and anti-money laundering training. The results have been indeed impressive.

First, the Kingdom has put new laws in place that are designed to ensure donations to all charities are not diverted to entities other than authentic humanitarian organizations. Riyadh has also issued instructions to diverse agencies prohibiting the transfer of funds by charitable organizations to recipients outside the Kingdom, except with Foreign Ministry approval, and these are subject to stringent reporting requirements. A ban on cash collections at mosques has been implemented.

Next, regarding banking law, the Kingdom now requires that charitable organizations have single-disbursement bank accounts, as well as an approved official with signatory authority to facilitate tighter controls over such accounts. New rules have been codified concerning the opening of bank accounts by charities, including all accounts consisting of one single account for each charity, with sub-accounts permitted, though restricted to only receiving deposits. No ATM or credit cards can be issued for these accounts, and all payments may be made only by checks payable to the first beneficiary for deposit in a Saudi bank.

Furthermore, across Saudi Arabia, all unlicensed money-exchange houses have been shut down, while the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA), the financial oversight authority founded in 2003, conducts tight supervision of so-called 'informal' money-transfer houses used to send funds abroad. The establishment of a financial intelligence unit (the Saudi Arabian Financial Intelligence Unit, or SAFIU), in compliance with the standards of the G7's the Financial Action Task Force(FATF), oversees the collection and sharing of information on suspicious financial transactions.

Saudi Arabia further strengthened its crack-down on money-laundering by requiring financial institutions to verify customers' identities and by placing restrictions on non-residents' ability to open accounts in the country.

As to the problem of donations being given by way of clerics and madrassas--so powerful a religious-cultural force in Muslim societies and particularly Saudi Arabia--the Kingdom has instituted the aggressive vetting of religious clerics and a ban on cash collections at mosques. The Saudi government suspended more than 1000 clerics in 2013 and 900 clerics in 2014 on the grounds of 'negligence' with regard to this new stringency.

Additionally, Saudi Arabia has taken other actions that benefit joint efforts to combat terrorism financing efforts with the United States. The Ministry of Labor has developed a database containing financial information relating to all of its charities, and updates the database on a quarterly basis with information derived from submitted financial reports. An effort is underway to integrate the charities licensed by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs into this database. Lastly, the Saudi Ministry of Labor is currently conducting an audit of all its licensed charities.

Saudi Arabia has also established official government-operated money remitters intended to compete directly with unlicensed money remitters and informal financial systems. These licensed remitters are called "Speed Cash", and are attached to

a commercial bank and therefore subject to all requirements of the parent bank. Saudi private sector representatives report that the service has been a profitable business, and officials believe that it has reduced the extent to which there is reliance on informal systems.

Finally, in confronting the new threat posed directly by Daesh/ISIL on this front, the Counter ISIL Finance Group (CIFG) was formed in March 2015 to support the efforts of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and is co-led by Italy, Saudi Arabia and the United States. The aim of this body to prevent Daesh/ISIL from accessing the international financial system and to deny 'Daesh'/ISIL funding from abroad. Working together, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. have identified seventeen prominent financial -facilitators directly associated with ISIL as of 2015.

Despite Saudi Arabia's unearned reputation as the "source" of international terrorism funding, it is Qatar and Kuwait, according to David Cohen, the Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, in March 2014, who have had the most permissible jurisdictions in the Gulf when it comes to the soliciting of donations to fund extremists. That agency singles out Kuwait as an "epicenter of fundraising for terrorist groups".

Meanwhile, notes Cohen on the same occasion, Saudi Arabia "has made great progress" in "stamping out" terrorism-financing, something he attributes to the "critical bilateral cooperation" between Riyadh and Washington.

Saudi Arabia has waged an uphill battle in an effort to underscore to the international community its commitment to the fight against terror. However, the Kingdom takes particular pride in the fact that its various campaigns against terrorism-financing have been thus far highly successful. It is this most elusive form of support for extremist groups and ideologies that fuels the men and the mindset of terrorism, and it is only a genuine ally in the region that can and will properly effect its elimination.

III

SAUDI ARABIA & EXTREMISM

Confronting Extremism

By Ambassador Al-Saud | The Huffington Post | March 9, 2016

Extremism, especially violent extremism, is a scourge on the planet. Those who promote extremist ideologies or sponsor acts of violence in the name of Islam cannot be condoned or supported by anyone of true faith. In Saudi Arabia, extremists have attempted to hijack our religion, have murdered many of our people and used terrorism to intimidate our nation. There are two things that Saudi Arabia and its people hold most dear, and will never allow to be threatened - our faith and our security.

Saudi Arabia has been falsely accused by some commentators of promoting extremism. Don't they realize that extremists are as much or more of a threat to Saudi Arabia than to any other part of the world? If critics took the time to look at the facts, they would see that Saudi Arabia has and will continue to lead all nations in combating the mindset that foments violent extremism. Because as the home of Islam's two holiest mosques, we have both the responsibility and the authority to prevent Islam from being perverted by evildoers.

Every part of Saudi society has united to confront extremism. Our religious scholars, including the Mufti and members of the Board of Senior Scholars, have loudly and repeatedly condemned extremism and terrorism and have worked to guide those who could be deluded by extremist ideologies away from that misguided path. Mosques are being protected from becoming platforms for inciting extremism or collecting money that could be diverted into the wrong hands. Our educational systems and curriculum continue to go through major reforms, including teacher training to ensure that our children receive the best religious education. Teachers who fail to meet strict guidelines are removed. The government has also invested in massive public education programs to educate people on the dangers of extremism. These programs have included, but are not limited to, advertising, social media, events, and television programs.

Saudi Arabia is waging a “war of ideas” to prevent the terrorist mindset from taking root among vulnerable populations in our country and around the world, such as the young and the potentially disenfranchised.

These efforts include everything from direct outreach to the Islamic world at large to rehabilitation programs that instill the concepts of moderation and tolerance, and undermine any intellectual or religious rationalization for extremism and terrorism. Saudi Arabia has taken direct, focused steps to neutralize sources of extremism. The Ministry of Interior - drawing on the expertise of an array of social scientists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and others - has created strategies tailored to neutralizing radicalism.

In addition, the Ministry has been working in conjunction with King Fahd Security College, and Naif Arab University for Security Sciences; as well as other universities and research centers to develop and refine training for public security professionals.

Some point to our faith, calling us “Wahhabis” (meaning Saudis), as a convenient group to blame for the global problem of extremism. But the fact is there is no group of people called “Wahhabis.” You will not find a “Wahhabi” anywhere in Saudi Arabia. There is no book of “Wahhabism” or any meeting of “Wahhabists.” It does not exist. “Wahhabism” is an invented term that has become a slur against the Saudi people. The historical reality comes from an 18th century Islamic scholar named Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. He believed and preached that Muslims should adhere to the original sources of their religion, The Holy Qur’an and Sunnah (teachings and attributes of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him). Over the centuries, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s approach became part of one of the major schools of Islamic thought called the Hanbali School. Hanbali is an orthodox and conservative philosophy. But violent or extremist? Absolutely not.

Today, we often hear claims that the “Wahhabis” are exporting extremism and fueling radicalism in religious schools and “madrasahs.” Setting aside the prejudicial overtones of such statements, the very idea is absurd. Saudi Arabia has never had expansionist ambitions. And it is illogical for the Kingdom to promote the very mindset that has threatened Saudi Arabia with deadly attacks against our homes and mosques.

We believe that spiritual leaders from every corner of the globe, no matter what religion, must be engaged in the “war of ideas” against terrorism, and Saudi Arabia has taken it upon itself to facilitate that.

In early 2008, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz launched the interfaith dialogue as a way to underscore the commonalities among the world’s religions. To initiate this endeavor, King Abdullah convened a meeting on June

4, 2008 of more than 500 Muslim scholars from around the world. The conference highlighted the importance of dialogue and emphasized the need for the faiths and cultures of the world to combat extremism and intolerance.

This was followed by the World Conference on Dialogue in Spain on July 16, 2008. The conference, hosted by King Abdullah and King Juan Carlos I of Spain, brought together 300 delegates from around the world representing Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Judaism and Shintoism. The culmination of this dialogue initiative was a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on November 12, 2008, attended by more than 25 world leaders. In 2011, The King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) was founded in Vienna to promote mutual understanding among followers of different religions and cultures around the world.

So rather than allow these baseless charges to continue, let's focus on the facts. First and foremost, it is contrary to our faith and the fundamental tenets of Islam to allow extremism to exist. True Islamic values are based on peace, the sanctity of life, concern for the needy, the improvement of self and the worship of God. Extremists violate all of these beliefs, and there is no place for them in our society or any other.

Second, it is in our national security interests to eradicate extremist ideology which advocates for the destabilization of our region, the use of terrorism to create fear and chaos, and the violent overthrow of our society. Saudis are working together to modernize our society and create a better life for our children. Extremism has no place within that vision. Rather than point fingers, we hope the world will work with us to help achieve these goals.

Since its inception, Saudi Arabia has stood firmly against all violent extremist movements regardless of their religious or ideological excuses. Recently, the Kingdom announced the formation of an Islamic coalition to combat terrorism, which includes nearly 40 countries. In addition, the Kingdom intensified its participation in the military campaign against Daesh (ISIS) and we are ready to send ground troops to Syria to take the fight to Daesh. Saudi Arabia is also playing a leading role within the International coalition in the efforts to cut off funding to Daesh.

Saudi Arabia will win this battle against extremism no matter how long it may take.

We will combat terrorist groups militarily and ideologically. We will work with regional and international partners to promote political stability to create the environment for a lasting and sustainable peace and security.

Ambassador Abdullah Al-Saud was born in 1951 in Saudi Arabia. He received his education in Saudi Arabia and studied engineering in the United Kingdom. He presented his credentials to U.S. President Barack Obama at the White House on January 28, 2016.

IV

SAUDI ARABIA & YEMEN

“Yemen: One Year Later”

By Abdullah Al-Saud | The Wall Street Journal | March 26, 2015

There was something different about the Saudi monarch on the evening of March 26, 2015. I was at a family dinner attended by King Salman. On this particular night, he seemed distracted and burdened. He left the dinner early without saying his usual good byes.

When I woke the next morning, I began to understand what was weighing on King Salman: Saudi Arabia and its allies had just launched “Operation Decisive Storm,” a military campaign to restore stability to Yemen, a country in chaos on our southern border. The action was urgently requested by Yemen’s President Abd-Rabu Mansur Hadi, after Iranian-backed Houthi militias occupied most of the country, including its capital, San’a.

As we approach the cease fire and peace negotiations scheduled next month, and the April 21 Gulf Arab summit in Saudi Arabia, which President Obama will attend, it is worth reviewing the events since Operative Decisive Storm began.

I was out of government service when the operation was launched. So like many Saudis, I wondered why the kingdom had taken this unusually bold action. Saudi Arabia is not a country that has a tendency to leap into military ventures. It cherishes peace and stability above all, and our nation has no expansionist ambitions. The Saudi government has been the largest supporter of successive Yemeni governments, providing crucial economic and security assistance in their counterterrorism effort. So what drove Saudi Arabia to war?

In 2014, the Houthis, who are a component of Yemen’s population, abandoned peaceful participation in their country’s political discourse. Instead, they opted to exploit the

situation in Yemen as the newly-elected legitimate government was still finding its footing. Houthi militias, spurred by Iran and backed by forces allied to Yemen's former president, began to take over city after city by force. Yemen's legitimate government attempted to resolve the crisis through peaceful negotiations. The Houthis repeatedly announced that they would agree to resolve the crisis peacefully, only to renege on their commitments and continue their takeover of the country.

When the capital fell to the Houthis in December 2014, flights between Tehran and San'a quadrupled overnight, some of which carried weapons and military advisers to support the Houthis. Pushing further south in 2015, the Houthis were at the doorstep of the port city of Aden, the last remaining bastion of legitimacy in Yemen, where the government and many embassies had relocated after the takeover of San'a. Something had to be done.

Saudi Arabia shares a border with Yemen that stretches for almost 1,000 miles. The events in Yemen had become a direct threat to Saudi Arabia's national security. Our neighbor was almost completely controlled by a militia influenced and supported by Iran, an internationally-recognized state sponsor of terrorism. This armed militia on the border was in control of ballistic missiles and an air force.

Houthi propaganda also raised sectarian tensions in the country and the region. This made it easier for al Qaeda's branch in Yemen to recruit and expand, finding its strength in the security vacuum created by the Houthi takeover of state institutions. This is the same branch of al Qaeda that bombed the USS Cole in the Gulf of Aden in October 2000, and carried out the murders of several Saudi and Western nationals.

No country would accept a similar situation on its border. It is not only destabilizing for Saudi Arabia, but for the global community and many countries, including the U.S., graciously and bravely joined or supported the kingdom in answering the Yemeni government's calls for intervention. The international community supported the operations: the U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 2216—including sanctions and demands that the Houthis withdraw from all territory they seized—without a single objection, although Russia abstained.

In this brew of anarchy and turmoil, Saudi Arabia's goal is to restore order and implement Resolution 2216, to make it possible for Yemen's legitimate government to return to San'a. We must begin a robust reconstruction program, and preserve the integrity of both borders and national security. Saudi Arabia has been working with its allies to take all precautions to protect civilians, medical staff, humanitarian or-

ganizations and journalists in Yemen. As part of these efforts, the kingdom established a high-level independent committee to assess the coalition's operations and rules of engagement.

By February, the kingdom and its partners had destroyed the ballistic- missile launch capabilities that the Houthi militia were using to attack Saudi Arabia. Today, Yemeni forces, supported by the kingdom and members of our coalition, have recaptured 80% of Yemeni territory.

From the beginning, our country's goal in this conflict has been to restore the legitimate order that will bring economic and social growth. I am optimistic that the continuing negotiations will result in a breakthrough, and I hope that any positive outcomes are honored by the Houthis and their allies.

The international community must also do its part in confronting the Houthis and those who support them, to make it clear that the world will not stand idly by while a militia attempts to take over a country by force. Yemen is a tragedy in which an outside force is at work to expand its influence by exploiting localized factions. Unless this aggression is ended, the prospect of graver consequences will continue to threaten regional stability.

Prince Abdullah is Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States.

V

SAUDI-U.S. JOINT COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS

By Nail Al-Jubeir, Politico | April 4, 2016

Millions of dollars a year flow from private individuals and organizations to Daesh (the Islamic State), Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups. Terrorists depend on it. Without the shadowy bankrolling by international financing networks, terrorist groups would not be capable of inflicting the murder, brutality and fear that has sadly become all too common around the globe.

Countries must work closely together and share intelligence information to disrupt these financing networks. Yet, some foreign policy analysts contend that there is a supposed “strain in relations” between the United States and Saudi Arabia. That could not be further from the truth. Our goals and shared national interests are the same — especially when it comes to combating terrorism and terror financing.

The latest accomplishment of the partnership between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia in the war against terrorism was achieved last week. On March 31, Saudi Arabia, acting jointly with the United States, took action to disrupt major networks of terrorist financing with ties across Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Four individuals, operating in Pakistan, and two organizations that supplied funding to recruit fighters and launch operations of Al Qaeda, the Taliban and Lashkar-e-Taiba (one of the most militant terrorist groups in Pakistan) are now legally designated as terrorists under Saudi Arabia’s Law of Terrorism Crimes and Financing, and their funds and property frozen by the U.S.

One of the individuals designated as terrorist by Saudi authorities provided funds, weapons and explosives to the Taliban forces fighting the U.S. military in Afghanistan.

Tracking the origins of financing is the most elusive piece in the puzzle of the war on terrorism. But Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Department of the Treasury and FBI have been steadily working together since 2004 to shut down terror financing operations by sharing intelligence and undertaking combined enforcement actions to publicize and punish the sources of terrorist funding.

Saudi Arabia, in joint investigations with the U.S., has identified 17 prominent financial facilitators that are directly associated with Daesh. These sources, and others like them, are being shut down. We have also succeeded in dissolving groups such as Al-Furqan, a charity that was a major conduit of financial and material support for terrorist groups, and the charity front Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, notoriously tied to Osama bin Laden, the Taliban and Al Qaeda's terror campaigns.

Saudi Arabia takes pride in our efforts to staunch this flow of financing. It is the major form of support that fuels extremist groups and the ideologies and mind-set of the terrorists — and Saudi Arabia is the only major U.S. ally in the region capable of blocking it.

U.S. officials have often stressed the importance of this relationship. When the U.S. and Saudi Arabia announced the joint effort last week, a senior U.S. official said the battle to “financially cripple terrorist financiers demonstrates the United States’ and Saudi Arabia’s shared resolve to target those who support terrorism.”

In the past, critics have wrongly accused Saudi Arabia of funding extremists and their ideology. But the anti-terror partnership with the U.S. is irrevocable evidence that Saudi Arabia is taking a leading role in preventing the export and proliferation of the resources that extremists require to expand.

Progress in blocking terrorism funding is also taking place because Saudi Arabia has instituted one of the world's strictest financial control systems.

Over the past decade, Saudi Arabia has enacted a comprehensive set of new laws to stop terrorist financing from infiltrating the banking system, and new laws and regulations are now in place to crack down on money-laundering and suspicious transactions and eliminate the dubious “money-exchange” bureaus, which had been assisting in the flow of illegal financing.

The new laws prevent ATM or credit cards from being issued for charitable accounts, and all payments must be made only by checks payable to the first beneficiary for deposit in a Saudi bank. It is now mandatory for charities to have one single-disbursement bank account, and an approved official with signatory authority to facilitate tighter control.

There are new requirements that outlaw donations to charities from being diverted to causes other than authentic humanitarian organizations. We have also prohibited the transfer of funds by charitable organizations to any organization or person outside Saudi Arabia that is not approved by our tight government standards. The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, the financial oversight authority, closely supervises the so-called informal money-transfer houses used to send funds abroad.

A ban on cash collections at mosques and public places has been in force for more than a decade.

To further strengthen enforcement, judges and investigators are receiving technical training on legal matters involving terrorism financing and money laundering methods, international requirements for financial secrecy, and methods used by criminals to exchange information.

In addition to new legal measures, the Saudi government has arrested more than a thousand suspects accused of financing and planning terrorist attacks. The suspects, although taken into custody in our country, come from many nations, including Yemen, Syria, the U.S., Indonesia and the Philippines.

Even with the steps we've already taken, with more to follow, it is only in partnership with the United States that we can eradicate terrorism and shut down its financing networks. There is no more significant issue that strongly binds our countries.

We are at war with Daesh and Al Qaeda. The leader of Daesh, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, singled out the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as his principal enemy. No nation has greater incentive than we do to make sure that those who blow up our mosques, kill innocent civilians and distort our faith are denied access to the tools of murder and anarchy.

Nail Al-Jubeir is director of the information office of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia

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